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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 16, 2000

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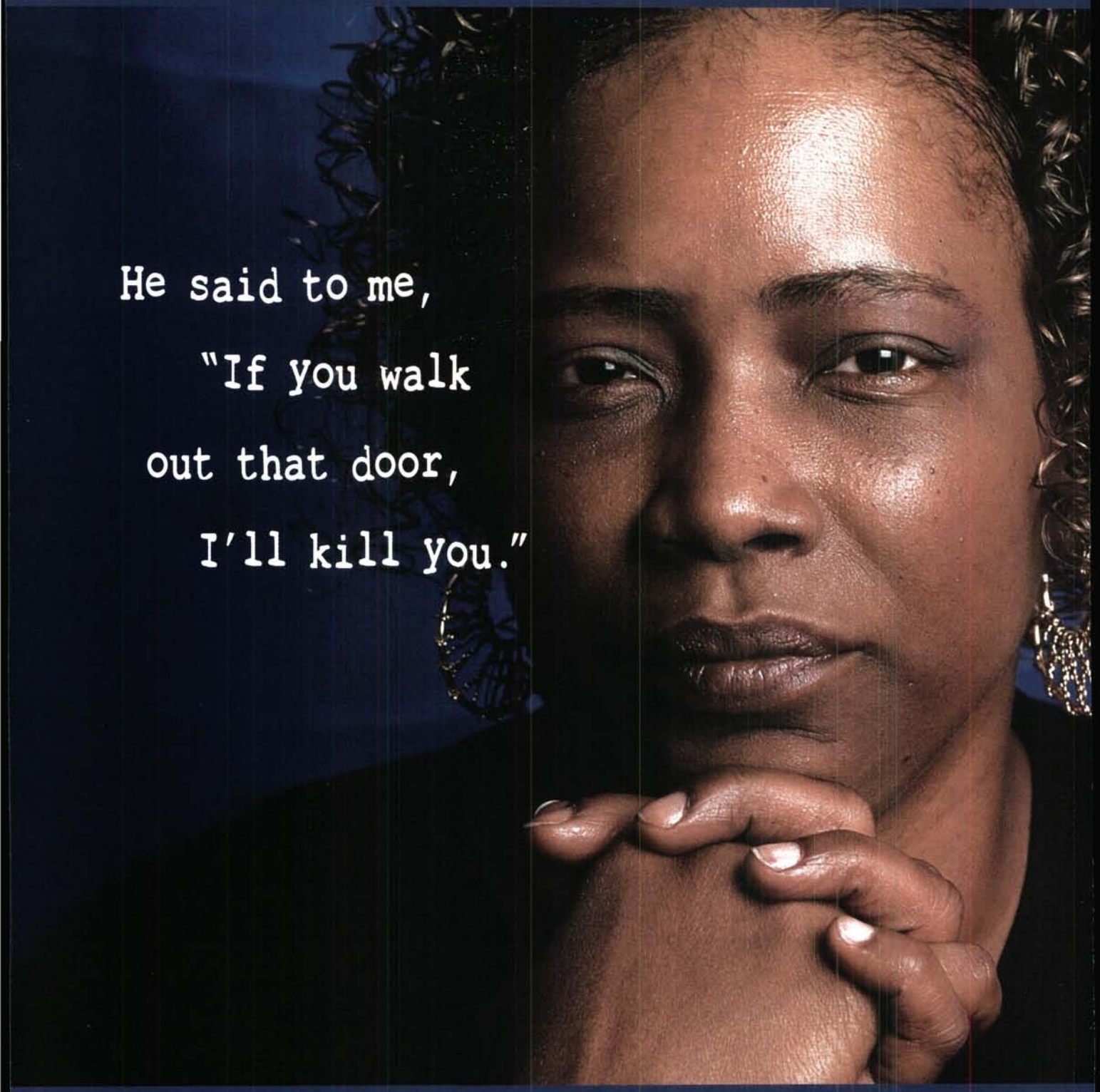

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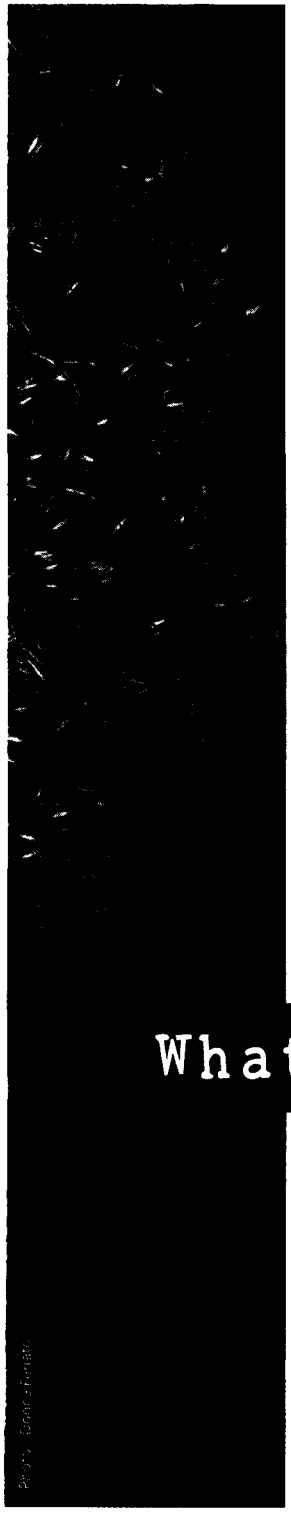

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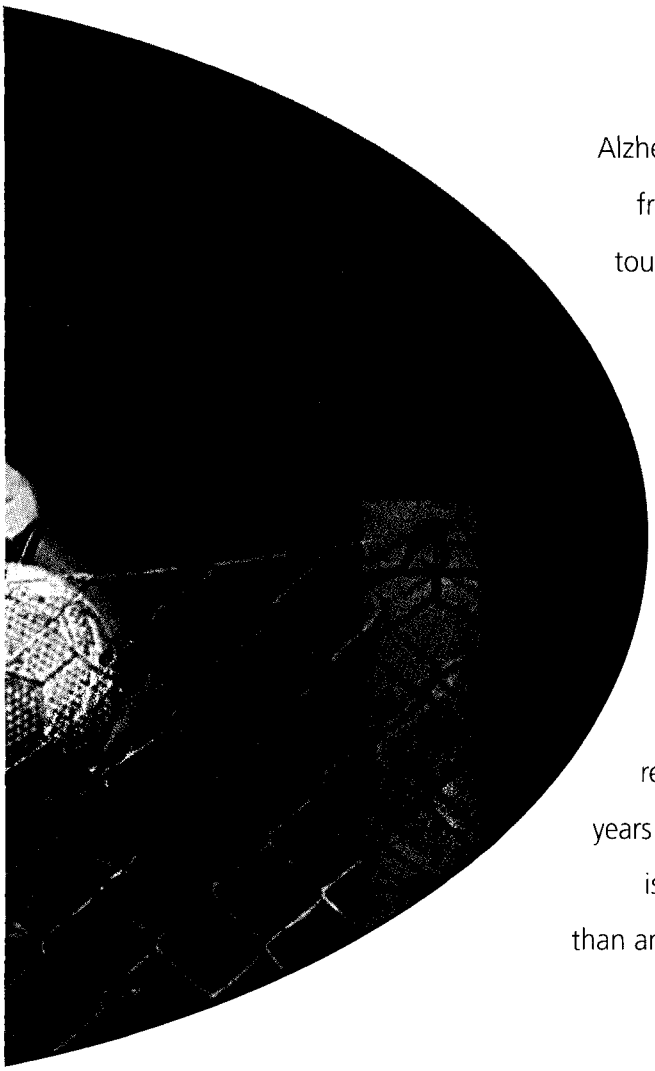

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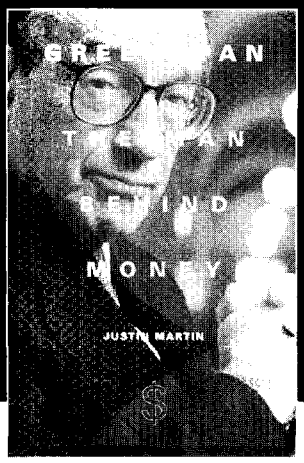

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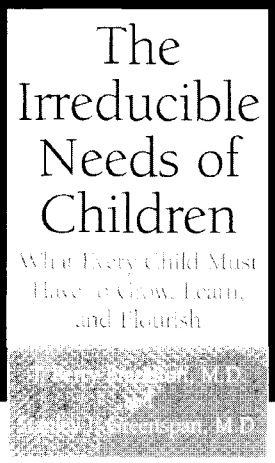

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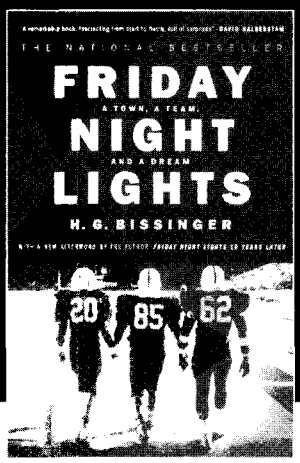

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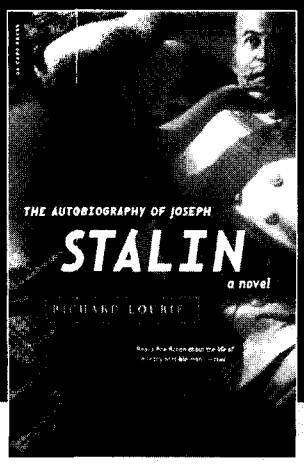

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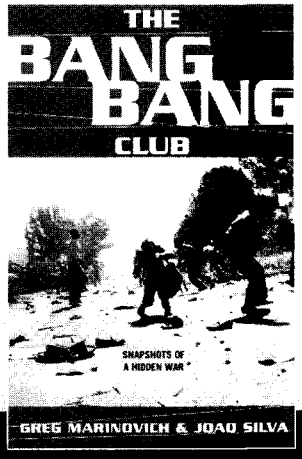

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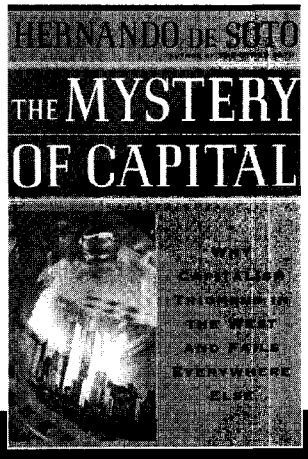

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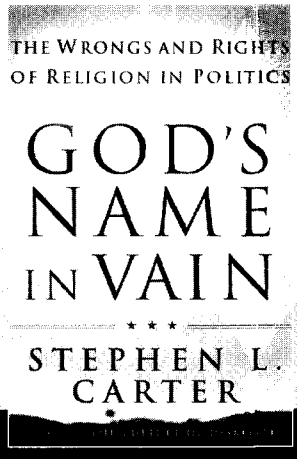

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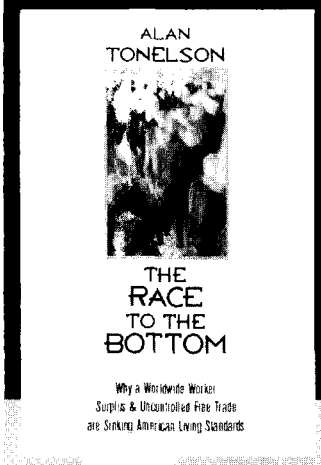

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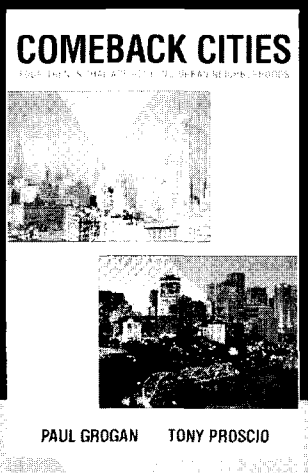

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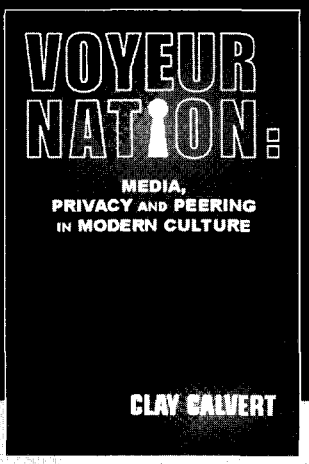

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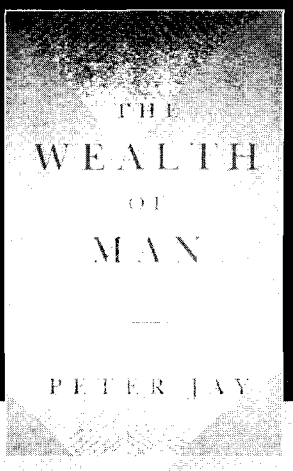

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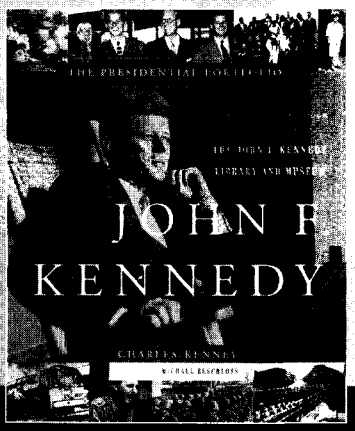

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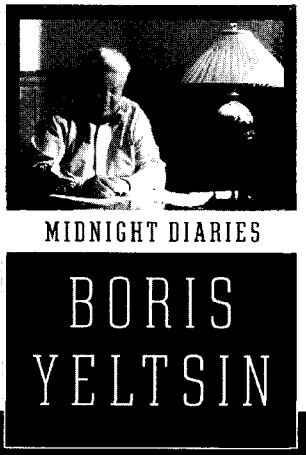

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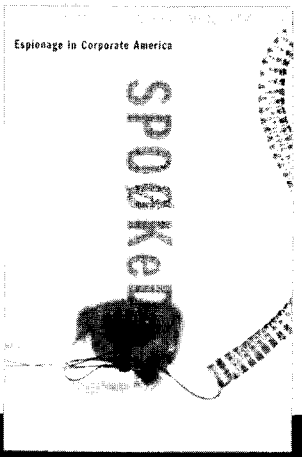

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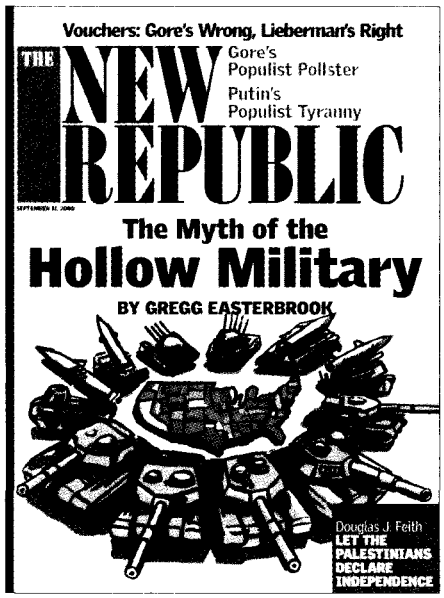
TO THE EDITORS:

In "Easy Choice" (September 11), THE NEW REPUBLIC gives its support to vouchers "for empirical reasons, not ideological ones." By the standard you set for evaluating vouchers—the use of "systematic, unimpeachable evidence, not assumptions"—TNR's position is wrong. The sum of your "empirical reasons" is two anecdotes about two urban public schools, one poll, and one empirical study of privately funded vouchers in three cities.

First, the study. Its authors are the avowedly pro-voucher Paul Peterson and his former students. According to one of the study's principal researchers, David Myers of the nonpartisan group Mathematica Policy Research, the authors' representations of the positive impact of vouchers on achievement were exaggerated and misleading. Myers's charge has been corroborated and added to by other experts, while Peterson refuses to release his data for reanalysis. In fact, every non-Peterson evaluation of the publicly funded voucher experiments in Milwaukee and Cleveland and even a close read of Peterson's study of privately financed vouchers in New York



City, Washington, D.C., and Dayton, Ohio, shows that, at most, vouchers modestly improve achievement in some subjects for low-income youngsters who are chosen, and kept, by the private schools they select—a relatively small and favored handful. The evidence from nationwide voucher experiments is even more negative.

Will the competitive threat of vouchers improve troubled public schools, as your two anecdotes suggest? For broader, empirical evidence to the contrary, read Edward Fiske and Helen Ladd's study of New Zealand's decade-old market school system. Competition does not solve the problems of problem schools; it exacerbates them. Solutions come from interventions that *directly* apply what we've learned about improving the education of poor children. That is a counsel of hope backed by solid evidence. The counsel of despair comes from voucher supporters who, in the name of helping "the motivated few," would increase the already great risks faced by poor children, the vast majority of whom are just as deserving, willing, and able to learn as the "few."

Why, then, do poor people support vouchers? They have an excuse: frustration, which we share, with the pace of reform and with inequitable education funding. But the polls also show that poor people—and all Americans—overwhelmingly support improving public schools over vouchers. You say poor people deserve vouchers to see if they're wrong about them. Don't they first deserve to find out if they are right about their preference for public school improvement

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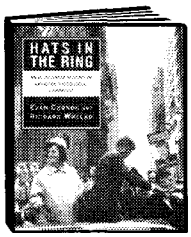

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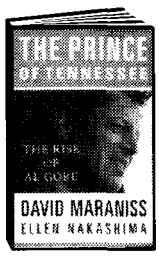

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The Rise of Al Gore
by David Maraniss & Ellen Nakashima

The Prince of Tennessee examines the forces that shaped Gore's life and career, revealing why he thinks and acts as he does and how his past might foretell the kind of president he may be. It draws on documents, letters, and interviews with more than 300 people, including six lengthy conversations with the vice president to explore the man behind the public figure.

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The Control Room
How Television Calls the Shots in Presidential Elections
by Martin Plissner

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and equitable funding?

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There is a cost when opinion leaders indiscriminately swallow the assorted claims of those who are notoriously hostile toward or ignorant about public schools, while just as indiscriminately gagging on the views or efforts of pro-public-education groups. Accountability should apply to opinion leaders, too. Because the ultimate, terrible cost of ignoring the evidence about public schools' improvement, and of failing to support efforts to make it go faster and deeper, is borne by our children.

SANDRA FELDMAN
President
American Federation of Teachers
Washington, D.C.

THE EDITORS REPLY:

Sandra Feldman's first point is shameless. She quotes us saying vouchers must be evaluated based on "systematic, unimpeachable evidence" and then says, "By the standard you set ... TNR's position is wrong" because we provided only "two anecdotes" and "one empirical study" on vouchers' behalf. But we never claimed we had "systematic, unimpeachable evidence" of vouchers' success. We said precisely the opposite—that because we don't (the evidence so far is encouraging but limited), we need further experimentation to see whether data emerge to justify "vouchers' widespread use." Had Feldman quoted the entire sentence rather than a fragment, that would have been obvious. Feldman cites David Myers to undermine the Peterson study of vouchers in New York, Washington, and Dayton. But Myers's criticism is that in New York the vouchers boosted the scores only of African American sixth graders and so can't be generalized to African Americans in other grades. Fine. So in New York they

continued on page 69

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

RU 4 Life

THE ODD, ORCHESTRATED dance that is the politics of abortion completed another quadrille last week with the approval of RU-486, a pharmaceutical cocktail that induces abortion. The "pro-choice" lobby weighed in enthusiastically but warned of the imminent danger of electing an "anti-choice" president. The "pro-life" forces resorted to epithets like "baby poison" and questioned the motives of the Food and Drug Administration. In the Manichaean debate over "life" and "choice" between Republican Representative Tom Coburn and abortion dogmatist Kate Michelman, the possibility of some sort of incremental progress appeared as remote as ever.

And yet it seems to me that RU-486 is indeed a sort of progress, if a kind fraught with moral danger. I say this as someone horrified by any abortion. It's something of a taboo to say this in polite society, but I can't think of any circumstances in which I could advise someone to abort a fetus. For me, abortion is the taking of a form of human life, as repugnant as killing a disabled person or euthanizing someone who has Alzheimer's. At the same time, I'm aware that good people in good conscience disagree and that the fact that this form of human life is contained within another human body makes the situation unique. I also recognize that, in a free society, the power of a government to regulate such a personal medical decision is rightly limited. As for the idea that such tolerance should not extend to "murder," I'm forced to say that abortion isn't "murder" as long as the "murderer" sincerely believes it isn't. Murder requires conscious intent. And the status of a fetus is murky enough to make the belief that abortion isn't murder a plausible one.

So my feelings on the issue—like those of so many others—are marked by constant, acute unease. I would dearly love to live in a society with no abortions, but I'm not prepared to countenance the kind of government power that would make that possible anytime soon. I want to affirm the immorality of all abortions, but I don't want to treat my fellow citizens, half of whom confront the issue in a way I never will, as moral pariahs. Does that make me inconsistent, or does it simply make me realistic? I don't know. But whatever my position is, it is not well-described by either the term "pro-choice" or the term "pro-life." I think I'm both.

Which is why RU-486 seems to me to be, on balance, a step forward. Its most immediate effect is to distill the meaning of the "choice" involved. Current medical abortions are essentially dual undertakings. They require a woman to consent to her body being invaded and her fetus killed; but they also require that another person perform the operation. The taking of a form of human life seems to me to have more serious moral consequences if it actively involves more than one person, just as the involvement of an accomplice in any wrongful act compounds its moral harm. So, in this sense, RU-486 helps mitigate the evil of abortion. Of course, RU-486, properly administered, involves a doctor at every stage and may, in a small percentage of cases, even necessitate an old-style surgical abortion—but, in most RU-486 cases, the actual act of killing the fetus is restricted to the mother by means of a couple of pills.

Hence, for the first time we really have choice worthy of the name. A woman cannot passively defer the decision to medical experts or have it done to her in an abortion clinic where she may be told that her abortion is not a moral problem. She must do it to herself and to her baby—and in the privacy of her own home. This may, in fact, make abortion harder for pregnant women to grapple with, not easier, as some pro-lifers claim. It's one thing—to take a related, if different, example—to support the death penalty. But if we each had to pull the switch ourselves, we might think again.

It also seems to me that the current pro-life, anti-RU-486 position misses an important moral intuition: that the longer a fetus has lived, the more troublesome an abortion is. This used to be the Catholic position, based on the Thomist notion that a human soul enters a fetus during the "quickening" at the end of the first trimester. It's also, in a subtle way, the philosophy behind the pro-life movement's recent campaign against "partial-birth abortions" carried out in the third trimester, when the violence inflicted on a babylike fetus rightly evokes recoil. Some pro-lifers may think of this emphasis merely as a propaganda ploy, a way to humanize the fetus and so play to our moral concerns about killing it at any time in its development. But, if so, the ploy hasn't worked; the anti-partial-birth campaign has won support from numerous prominent pro-choicers, but, as far as I know, awareness of the horrors of the procedure hasn't changed any of their minds about abortion per se.

And there's a good reason. "Partial birth" is the pro-life movement's first slam-dunk political issue in decades because it appeals to our deep moral sense that crushing the skull of a third-trimester fetus is more worrisome than terminating a cluster of cells a few weeks after conception. Purists find this distinction meaningless. Potential human life is potential human life, they argue, whether it's one month old or nine months old. But if this argument is logically powerful, it is also morally and practically obtuse. Unlike later-term abortions, which come close to having the psychological and physical effects of miscarriages, RU-486 abortions more closely mimic the natural, spontaneous abortions that often occur in early pregnancy.

If RU-486 increased the number of these early abortions and reduced the number of late-term abortions, it would not, I think, be a minor moral advance. That's a big "if," of course, but the European experience lends credence to the possibility. (In France, for example, where the abortion pill originated, the abortion rate is one-half that in the United States.) The difficult psychological impact of late-term abortions on women and families would also be lessened. Our society would be less coarsened by the knowledge that such procedures are being performed on fetuses that could live outside the womb. By making early abortion easier and more private, RU-486 would also subtly increase the social stigma of late abortions—paving the way perhaps for legislation making third-trimester abortions more difficult to get or even illegal altogether. In this way, the long-term effect of RU-486 might actually be to advance the pro-life cause rather than undermine it. If the pro-life leaders weren't such purists, they might see this.

Of course, if all RU-486 did was increase the net number of abortions, this moral equation would shift. But the European experience suggests that this pill doesn't do for abortion what that other pill did for sex. Since the introduction of RU-486 in Britain and France, total abortion rates have actually declined. And RU-486, as any woman who has taken it will testify, is no walk in the park. Like most weapons designed to kill, it's messy: painful cramps, persistent bleeding, physical and emotional trauma. Few women, I suspect, will take it casually, and those who do will soon realize that RU-486, like many other technological innovations, does not end moral choice. It merely sharpens it. For all of us.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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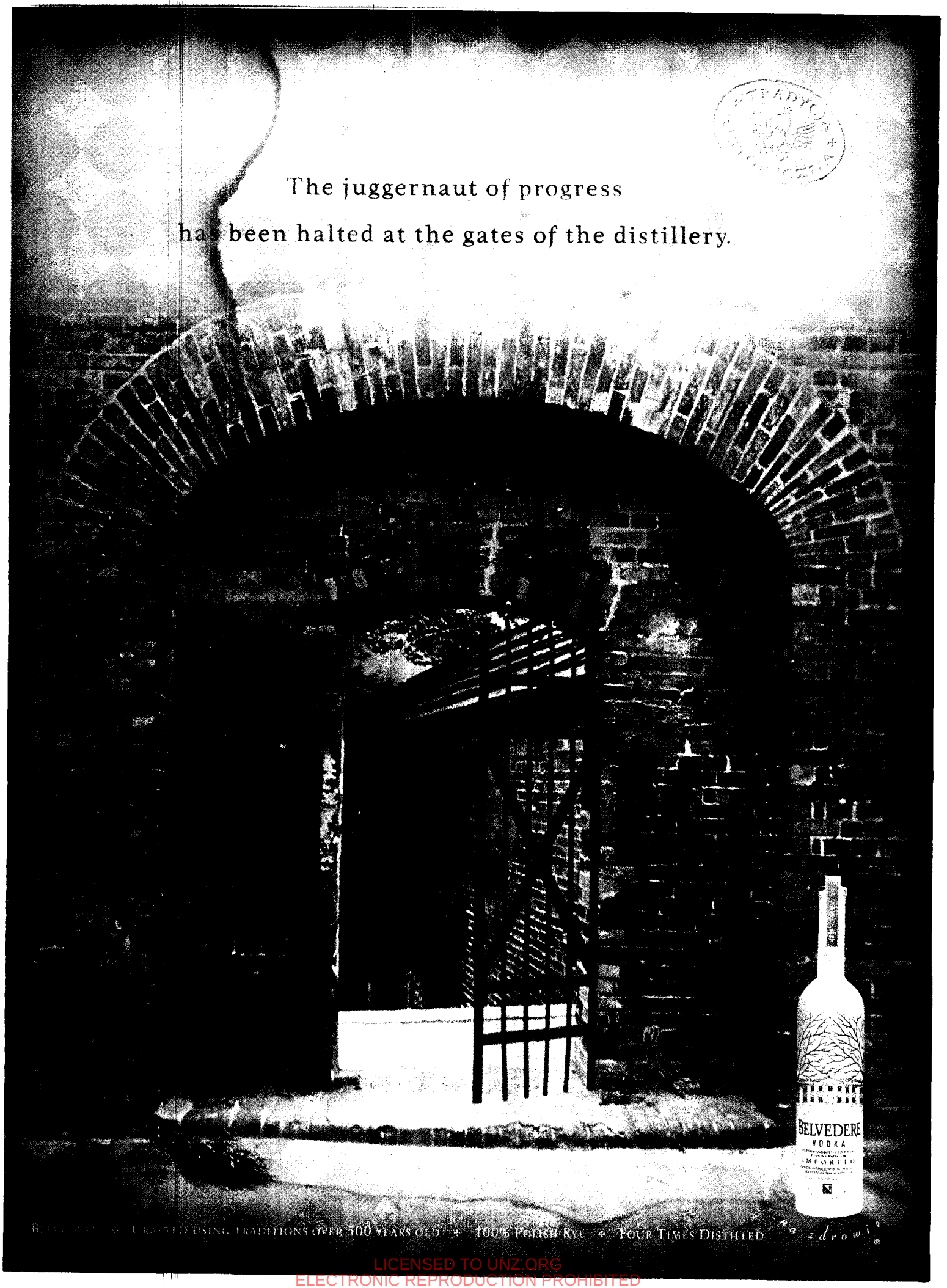
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When There Is No Peace

WHEN ARIEL SHARON took a stroll on the Temple Mount on September 28, he may as well have thrown a match into a barn; but this was a barn that was eager to burn. The discomfiting truth is that Sharon's provocation—or was he moved to visit the holy place in the hours before Rosh Hashanah to make a reckoning with his sins?—cannot account for the days of carnage that followed it. He was keen to provoke the Palestinians and they were keen to be provoked. He had a plan and they had a plan. His plan was to damage the peace process, and to secure his place as the champion of the opposition to Ehud Barak. (The attorney general's reluctant dismissal of corruption charges against Benjamin Netanyahu threatened to improve the political fortunes of Sharon's rival for the leadership of the Likud.) Their plan was to destroy the peace process, by exchanging the exasperations of diplomacy for the exaltations of violence.

In the early days of this latest Palestinian revolt, there was much talk of Palestinian anger. The Palestinians were angry about their economic situation, their social situation, their national situation; and isn't there honor, isn't there vitality, in anger? The response of various officials and experts was to regard this anger instrumentally or therapeutically. Madeleine Albright instructed that "the two sides must find a way to end the current psychology of confrontation and begin to restore the psychology of peacemaking"; and (as Deborah Sontag noted in *The New York Times*) "many ... believe that spasms of violence, historically, have led to peace breakthroughs ... [and] during the 15-day Camp David summit meeting last summer, several regional experts were skeptical about the chances of a final peace agreement because, they said, another round or two of bloodshed was needed." This is not only morally grotesque; it is also analytically grotesque. These were not just days of rage. These were also days of radicalism. The rampaging Palestinians with guns, in and out of uniform, were not (as Americans like to say) acting out. They were acting in a tradition of Palestinian politics, or anti-politics, that has never really been renounced.

This was not spontaneous violence. This was strategic violence. In a remarkable forthcoming study of what he calls "the deadly ethnic riot," Donald Horowitz remarks upon its "bizarre fusion of coherence and frenzy." The "common understanding of the riot," he observes, "tends to view it as an entirely spontaneous, uncontrolled, emotion-laden event ... but few riots occur with no organization whatever, and some are rather well-organized." The Palestinian explosion in the first week of October was so well-organized, in fact, that in certain places it looked less like a riot and more like a battle. And the battle was waged for the sake of certain objectives: to ruin the chances for a reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians when it looked as if a reconciliation might be in the making, and to diminish the authority of Yasir Arafat and his policy of negotiation. Arafat did not act against this challenge to his authority. Perhaps he lacked the power to act against it. Perhaps he had a use for the troubles: His refusal to accept Barak's extraordinary offer at Camp David had left the Palestinians, for the first time in decades, at a propaganda disadvantage. The footage of the fighting in Gaza and Nablus and Um-al-Fahm (the latter not in Palestine but in Israel) fixed that.

This was not only strategic violence. This was also sacralized violence. Looking at the faces of the Palestinian fighters in the streets, one saw also a twisted kind of ecstasy. The parents of murdered youngsters mingled their grief with a dark religious joy. The martyrological spirit was everywhere. "My son didn't die in vain," exclaimed the mother of Muhammad al-Durrah, the poor Gazan boy who was shot dead by Israeli soldiers before a French TV camera and promptly became the symbol of this killing season. "This was his sacrifice for our homeland, for Palestine." (The *New York Times* reporter on the scene permitted himself the mordant remark that "there is no indication that Muhammad had any intention of making this sacrifice.") And in Ramallah, the bereaved uncle of a 16-year-old victim of the Israeli retaliation regarded his nephew's corpse with pride. "This is his third time injured in a demonstration," he said, "and his last. All the time, he was saying, 'I want to be a martyr, I want to be a martyr.' He believed it was his destiny." This, too, is a horror. The murder of a child is not a lucky break. The murder of a child is senseless. Beware the individual and the group for whom the murder of a child makes sense. But it is the purpose of the martyrological mentality to confer sense upon it; and more generally to make war seem like fate, and defeat seem like victory. Why take some of Palestine when you can take all of heaven?

It is well-known that the Temple Mount has a deranging

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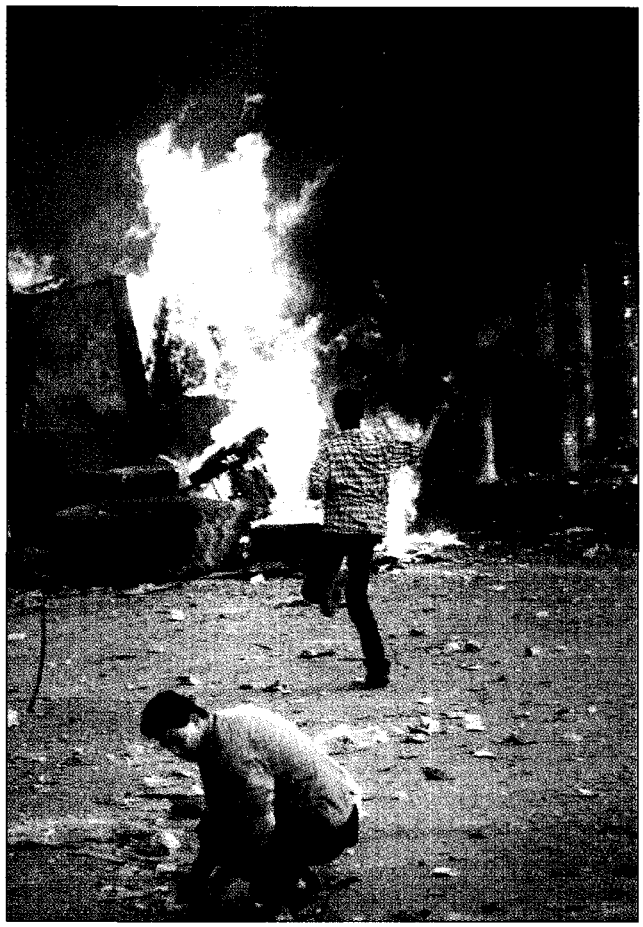
effect, and many pages have been written about the Jewish fanatics who are planning the restoration of the Temple. What is less commonly remembered is that the Temple Mount has played the same role in Palestinian nationalism. It has regularly enabled Palestinians to radicalize their nationalism and to Islamicize their nationalism. "Apprehension over the danger threatening the Muslim Holy Places in Palestine and the need to defend them accompanied the emergence of the Palestinian-Arab national movement from the start," wrote Yehoshua Porath in his great history of Palestinian nationalism. The Arab disturbances of 1929, which set the stage for the Arab revolt of 1936, were the consequence of a wave of hysteria about the possibility of a Jewish takeover of the Western Wall. (This was occasioned by the attempt of some religious Jews to bring benches and partitions to their worship there.) "The Muslims of Palestine are determined to sacrifice body and soul in order to safeguard their religious rights," declared the newspaper of the mufti of Jerusalem. Such incitements led promptly to pogroms, and when the British mandatory authorities hung three especially brutal Arab murderers the Arab Executive Committee in Jerusalem praised them as "innocent saints." Those riots had the effect of galvanizing the national movement, and (in the words of a prominent Arab official of the time) "it was this that those who caused the uprising ... had hoped for."



HOSSAM ABU ALAN/AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

No dead hand of history here. Quite the contrary. The hand of history lives, and tightens its grip. And unlike politics, history is final. The awful events of recent days bring you close to despair, because they leave you with a feeling of helplessness before history. For there is no "bridge proposal" that will reverse the sixth century B.C.E. or the seventh century C.E. When history overwhelms politics, it is the hour of prayers and guns. Whose heart is not shaken by the shooting of a twelve-year-old boy? It is certainly true that the boy would be alive today if an Israeli soldier had not fired a rifle in his direction. But it is also true that the boy would be alive today if the Palestinians had learned the lessons of their history and not taken Sharon's bait, and not rushed hotly into the streets for another futile exercise in purgation and disorder, and not refused all that was offered to them at Camp David a few months ago.

After all, Ariel Sharon is not the prime minister of Israel (though the Palestinians may yet bring him to power). The prime minister of Israel is Ehud Barak, who proposed to withdraw from virtually all of the West Bank and to concur in the establishment of a Palestinian state, and who has devoted the recent months to finding a politically plausible way to renounce the Jewish claim of undivided sovereignty over Jerusalem. But here is Muhammad Dahlan, the Palestinian chief of preventive security, telling a reporter that "after failing to secure concessions from us at the peace table, Barak has decided to negotiate with us by bullets." This view, which appears to prevail in many Palestinian quarters, is simply mad. It was Barak who was frantically making concessions at the peace table. It was Arafat who walked away from the establishment of Palestine, who put a sacred city before a secular state.

The Palestinians are making street war against the Barak government as they made street war against the Netanyahu government. A conclusion may confidently be drawn from this fact, and it is that the object of the Palestinian grievance is not this government of Israel or that government of Israel, it is Israel. Confidently, but also reluctantly: For if this is so, then the peace process was raised on false foundations, and it is doomed to collapse. Or worse, its collapse is precisely what we are witnessing. It was exceedingly strange, in the early days of the present crisis, to hear one American official after another, one Israeli official after another, mechanically respond with reassurances that the peace process must continue. The reassurances sounded hollow, because they did not take the recalcitrance of reality into account. Indeed, they seemed designed to protect the worldview of the peace processors against the evidence of reality's recalcitrance.

The sobering fact about these street battles is that they are taking place not before a peace process but after a peace process. So how can these street battles not rattle the faith in peace? Surely peace must be based on the relations between communities, not on the relations between diplomats; and the relations between the communities are fraying, fraying, fraying. Who is Dennis Ross for those masked kids with their automatic weapons? For the masses on the streets of Gaza, what is a peace conference compared to a funeral? "What we are seeing today is the glorious alternative to peace," Shimon Peres sardonically remarked. He is like a man who learns that he has a terrible disease and concludes that health is important: His conclusion is true, but it is not useful. There are harsh times when the idea of peace goes from being a beautiful idea to being a dishonest idea. This may be such a time. Peace is important, but so is honesty. ■

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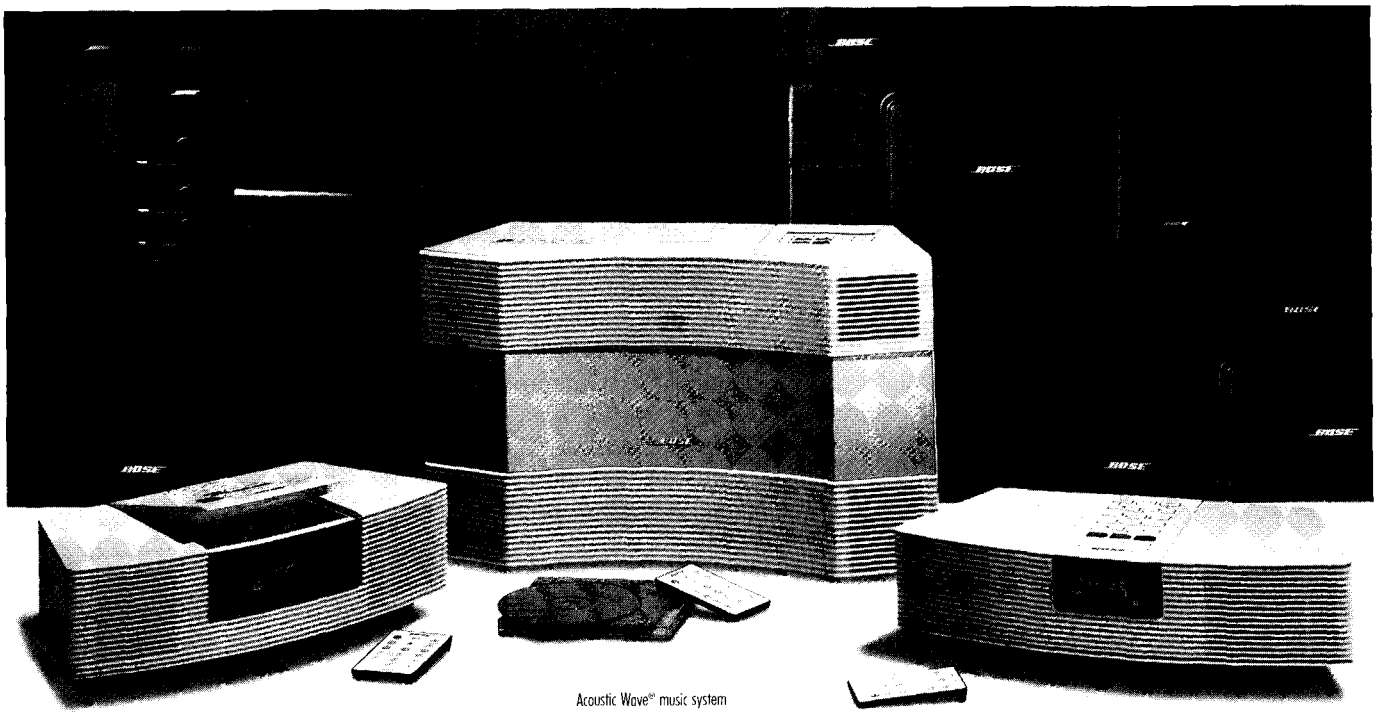

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NOTEBOOK

MILITARY READINESS: When asked recently to state in one sentence why he should be president, George W. Bush said, "I'm going to call upon the nation to usher in a period of personal responsibility. I want each and every American to know for certain that I'm responsible for the decisions I make, and each of you are, as well." Yes, the syntax is tortured, and he answered the question in two sentences, not one. But the real problem with Bush's response is that the governor still hasn't satisfactorily explained one episode in his life that has raised serious questions about his own responsibility. And, oddly, the media hasn't forced him to. In 1968, Bush was accepted into the Texas Air National Guard, which was dubbed the "Champagne Unit" (it was filled with many of the children of Texas's elite). Service in the Guard was primarily a route to avoid being sent to Vietnam; indeed, nationally, only 1 percent of Guardsmen and reservists were ever sent. Despite a long waiting list—one former Texas Guard master sergeant says there were 500 names on it—and Bush's dismal score of 25 percent on his pilot aptitude test, Bush was made a second lieutenant and given a coveted spot in pilot training school, a trajectory that, as several articles have noted, was unusual for a person of Bush's experience. So political connections probably helped Bush avoid serving in Vietnam. But that's not exactly shocking—Dan Quayle avoided the draft by securing a spot in the Indiana National Guard, and Bill Clinton escaped through some skillful maneuvering of his own. More remarkable, especially for a candidate who speaks endlessly of restoring "honor and integrity" to the White House and "morale" to the military, is the way Bush honored his commitment once he was lucky enough to be spared being sent to Vietnam. (Bush has said he would have welcomed an opportunity to serve in Vietnam, but on his Guard application he checked a box indicating he did not want to serve overseas.) It was costly to train pilots at the time, and so when Bush entered the Guard in 1968, he signed a statement declaring: "I, George Walker Bush, upon successful completion of pilot training plan to return to my unit and fulfill my obligation to the utmost of my ability. I have applied for pilot training with the goal of making flying a lifetime pursuit and I believe I can best accomplish this to my own satisfaction by serving as a member of the Air National Guard for as long as possible." In other words, in exchange for receiving his highly favorable Guard position, Bush pledged to serve as a pilot at least until his service ended. Bush appears to have performed his first years of service honorably. Flying a jet fighter is obviously not risk-free, and most accounts suggest Bush was good at it (though his recent boast that he was assigned to "protect the American coast" seems a stretch). But in his autobiography, *A Charge to Keep*, Bush claims that after flight training school in 1970, he "continued flying with [his] unit for the next several years." This is not true. In May 1972, Bush moved to Alabama to work on a Senate campaign, and he never flew again. In fact, in August 1972 the Texas Guard took Bush off active flight status for good because he skipped his annual medical exam. In Alabama and no longer a pilot, Bush was required to perform equivalent Guard duty, and he was ordered to report to Lieutenant Colonel William Turnipseed, who told reporters this year that he has no recollection of Bush ever showing up. Turnipseed's administrative officer at the time has also said he doesn't remember Bush serving in Alabama. Turnipseed told THE NEW REPUBLIC that he recently talked to the then-squadron operations officer of the Alabama Guard and that he, too, had no recollection of having seen Bush. Furthermore, a spokesman for the Alabama National Guard estimates there were 600 to 700 members in the unit Bush was supposed to have served with in 1972. But none of these men has ever come forward to say he remembers Bush, and Bush has not named a single one of them. Bush himself swears he reported for duty in Alabama but admitted in June, "I can't remember what I did." The only proof Bush has offered is an ex-girlfriend who has said she remembers that Bush told her he was supposed to perform Guard duty while in Alabama. But she has explicitly said that she never actually saw him doing anything Guard-related—only that he spoke of it. There is also no record of Bush ever having served in Alabama, a rather damning fact considering the Guard's obsessive attention to record-keeping in that era. In fact, there is no record of Bush serving anywhere for an entire year, from May 1972 to May 1973—despite having promised he would. But from May through July 1973, Bush performed a hectic 36 days of service in Texas (none of it flying). The most logical explanation—one the Bush campaign has partially conceded—is that Bush skipped a whole year of service and made up the lost duty requirements when he realized he wanted to leave the Guard. (According to rules at the time, Bush could have been drafted into the Army for missing his duty.) Although Bush was scheduled to end his service on May 26, 1974, he asked for and received a discharge in September 1973. He then went off to Harvard Business School. So much for his sworn statement to make flying a "lifetime pursuit" and serve in the Guard "as long as possible."

ADVISE AND DISSENT: In his speeches on Medicare, Bush frequently lambastes the 1997 Balanced Budget Agreement. Under the 1997 deal, which the Republican Congress passed and President Clinton signed, the government reduced the fees it pays the providers of medical services—doctors, hospitals, and so on—in order to control spending. The cuts have had the desired effect: Since the 1997 deal, Medicare spending has grown more slowly than private-sector health care spending. But Bush, like other critics of the deal, says the cuts went too far: "Hospitals are laying off staff and shutting down needed services. Home-care agencies are closing or reducing services. Nursing homes have been placed in financial jeopardy." Now, reasonable people can disagree about whether Bush is right. But you wouldn't think that includes reasonable people in Bush's own campaign. Or would you? As *The Washington*

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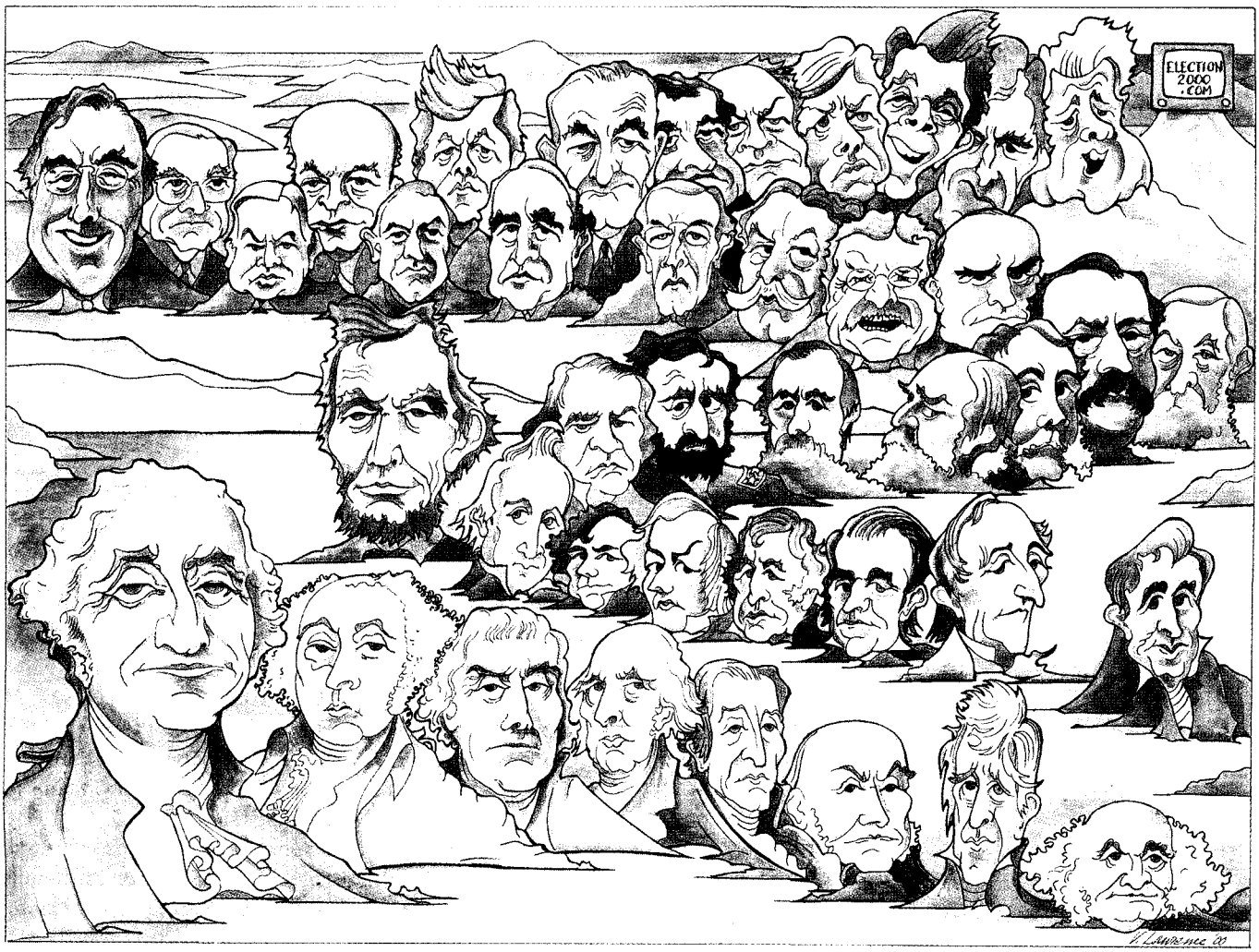
Post reported this Tuesday, Bush's chief health care adviser—Gail Wilensky, chairwoman of the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission—testified before Congress last year that "[t]here is not very much, if any, systematic evidence that seniors are having difficulty receiving care under Medicare as a result of the [1997] Balanced Budget Act." Perhaps she should alert her boss.

PARTY LOYALTY: For years, the Christian Coalition has insisted it is a nonpartisan educational organization and not an appendage of the Republican Party. Tell that to Pat Buchanan. According to Nina Easton's new book, *Gang of Five*, in 1995, when Buchanan last challenged the GOP establishment, Ralph Reed, then executive director of the coalition, told colleagues, "I'm gonna break Buchanan's neck and leave him in the snow without any fingerprints." When it came time to design invitations for the coalition's annual "Road to Victory" rally, Reed even made sure Buchanan's visage was absent from a collection of candidate photos. This year, of course, Buchanan is out of the party altogether, and the "nonpartisan" Christian Coalition is trying even harder to squash his presidential campaign. At this year's "Road to Victory" rally, held last weekend in Washington, coalition leaders rebuffed the Reform Party nominee's repeated requests to address the group. By contrast, coalition founder Pat Robertson practically begged George W. Bush to travel to Washington to address the gathering, only to have Bush deliver a videotaped speech in which he studiously avoided most of the issues Christian conservatives care about. Perhaps the coalition higher-ups are worried their members will realize that Buchanan has a much stronger record on their issues than W. Then again, since the coalition's "voter guides"—which offer an issue-by-issue comparison of the candidates—don't mention Buchanan, maybe they'll never find out.

ON SECOND THOUGHT: "I have actually not questioned Governor Bush's experience."
—Al Gore, responding to the first question at the October 3, 2000, presidential debate in Boston, Massachusetts

"You have to wonder whether [Bush] has the experience to be president. I mean, you really have to wonder.... You have to wonder: Does Governor Bush have the experience to be president?... Again you have to wonder: Does George Bush have the experience to be president?"
—Al Gore, in an interview with *The New York Times*, March 12 ■

VINT'S WEEK



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Campaign Journal

Overspin

By MICHELLE COTTLE

SENATOR JOHN KERRY looks positively giddy as he poses for the cameras, his long arms draped around three smiling Bud Girls. All told, seven Bud Girls are floating around the press filing area here at the University of Massachusetts's Clark Athletic Center, serving as perky, shapely goodwill ambassadors for Anheuser-Busch, proud sponsor of the evening's "2000 Presidential Debate Canteen." The ladies' primary job is to distribute commemorative plastic beer steins to the hordes of bored, hungry journalists who wander into the canteen to gorge on roast beef, play foosball, and watch ESPN.

Coincidentally, Kerry is a sort of ambassador as well—although he lacks the steins and the snug red sweater. That's because he, along with pretty much every other ambulatory member of the Democratic Party, has agreed to serve as an official post-debate surrogate for Al Gore, explaining to the media why, in his heartfelt and considered opinion, the vice president was the indisputable winner.

In fact, the debate itself is little more than a prelude. The real action—the reason we have traveled here, the reason Kerry is here, and the reason twentysomethings in both camps haven't slept for weeks—comes immediately after. It's been dubbed Spin Alley, the stretch of real estate directly in front of where the myriad TV crews have set up shop for the night. And, even before Gore and George W. wave goodbye to the crowd, each campaign will unleash a flood of surrogates to educate journalists about why tonight was so great for its man. The process will take a couple of hours and involve dozens of elected and appointed officials, campaign staffers, family members, and high-profile supporters. It is a frenzied, deeply self-important, occasionally stressful affair. And it is almost entirely pointless.

Pointless from the standpoint of campaign strategy, that is. Nothing offered by either army of surrogates is likely to have the slightest impact on media coverage of the debate. After all, if Bush or Gore were to come unglued on stage, no amount of spin would keep the gruesome incident from dominating the next day's headlines ("BUSH CONFUSES AUSTRIA WITH AUSTRALIA"; "GORE CLAIMS TO HAVE JAMMED WITH BEATLES"). And if there is no "gotcha" moment, the straight-news outlets will stick to their typical "objective" format—Gore claim, Bush claim, Gore rebuttal, Bush rebuttal, comment by Gore supporter, comment by Bush supporter, wash, rinse, repeat—while members of the opinion media will cherry-pick moments from the debate that support their own ideological biases.

But even if reporters could be swayed by creative and sophisticated analysis, they're unlikely to find any in Spin Alley, where surrogates stray from the campaign's numbing talking points only upon pain of death. As for the professional talking heads, they hit the air at almost the same second the spin begins and so don't have time to seek out the insightful nuggets provided by the likes of Alphonso Jackson (a Bush chum) before going live themselves. Even more important, the new technology of flash polling means they don't need partisan spinners to tell them who won—the public will. Who cares that Bill Daley's declaring a Gore victory when you can find out that 58 percent of non-college-educated, married, suburban, Midwestern swing voters thought Bush should have worn a periwinkle tie?

This isn't to say that tonight's post-debate spin circus won't serve a variety of nonstrategic aims. For starters, it's a necessary evil to keep the networks happy. After even the most minor political event, someone "in the know" must be served up for the cameras. But the networks' need for faces to put on the air is only half the equation; the other half is the surrogates' need for air to put their faces on. After all, how often does Ohio Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones (a Gore surrogate) find herself surrounded by literally hundreds of national reporters on deadline? The opportunity for momentary media stardom has led to an absurdly bloated cadre of designated spinners. Team Gore alone boasts 35 official surrogates—everyone from Ted Kennedy to Al Franken—all mouthing the same half-dozen hypercautious talking points green-lighted by the campaigns. And then there are the 700 strung-out campaign aides distributing those talking points—often packaged in sleek binders with pithy titles like "The Bush-Cheney Debate Survival Kit."

Within minutes of the debate's close, a strict hierarchy of spinners becomes clear: If you are an undisputed star—say, Karl Rove or Jesse Jackson—a mob of cameras and pencils hovers about you, documenting your every utterance. If, on the other hand, you are Bob Menendez or Marc Racicot, you have to be a bit more entrepreneurial. To facilitate the spinner/media mating dance, each surrogate is trailed by a harried-looking escort carrying a large sign bearing the surrogate's name. This not only helps reporters locate a particular individual in the crush, it helps them avoid mistaking lesser-known spinners for members of the university's maintenance crew. Of course, ambitious escorts know better than to leave things to chance. (God forbid your surrogate goes unnoticed.) Thus it is that I find myself manhandled into a tête-à-tête with DNC Chairman Ed Rendell. "You! How about you?" Rendell's escort yelps at me as I foolishly drift onto the fringes of the fray. Before I can flee, he puts a hand to my back and propels me over to Rendell, who stands languishing in the company of one lowly print reporter.

Less-confrontational escorts stand on chairs to draw attention to their charges. Other surrogates, meanwhile, jockey for prime placement next to brighter lights. During a slow period, J.C. Watts hovers at the edge of the perpetual scrum that surrounds Rove, while the escort for the AARP spinner sends his charge down toward Donna Shalala in hopes of snagging a few runoff questions.

And the debate itself? It went pretty much as expected. Bush got flustered and at times seemed unclear on the details of even his own programs. Gore, wearing a disturbing amount of rouge, came across as overbearing and pedantic.

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But nobody fainted, cried, whipped out an affidavit, or threw a punch, and, even before the closing statements were over, surrogates began storming the media center, where reporters had spent the last 90 minutes staring glassy-eyed at the proceedings on closed-circuit television. Which, ultimately, may be the best explanation of all for the spin brigades: Without them, news organizations would have little excuse to send journalists to the debate site and would be forced to admit that our crack reporting bears a shocking resemblance to what millions of Americans do in the comfort of their own homes: watch the damn thing on TV. ■

On the Hill

For Love or Money

By Noam Scheiber

It looked for all the world like a routine campaign event. When House Speaker Dennis Hastert visited California Representative Jim Rogan's district in August, the embattled congressman—who faces an uphill battle for reelection, thanks to his role as a House impeachment manager—arranged a meeting with leaders of his district's politically powerful Armenian community. Seated around a table in a Glendale auditorium, the community leaders argued that the United States should officially recognize the genocide perpetrated against Armenians by Ottoman Turks from 1915 to 1923. Rogan said he supported such a measure. According to several participants, Hastert vowed to do everything in his power to bring the legislation to a vote. A few hands were shaken, a few pleasantries were exchanged—the former mayor of Glendale joked that he had passed a resolution guaranteeing good weather for the occasion—and Hastert was on his way. The whole episode lasted less than an hour.

There was just one problem: When Hastert returned to Washington, he discovered that the House Republican leadership, almost without exception, was dead set against recognizing the Armenian genocide. The reason? In recent years, Republicans have received large soft money contributions from American defense contractors (like Boeing, Raytheon, and General Dynamics) and oil companies (including Exxon, Chevron, and Texaco) that do extensive business with Turkey. And those defense contractors and oil companies want to make sure relations between Washington and Ankara remain cordial—which they might not if Congress passed a resolution essentially accusing the Turks of genocide.

Republicans, Hastert realized, faced a dilemma. On the one hand, after impeachment, GOP leaders vowed to protect the House managers—particularly those representing moderate districts like Rogan's—from the Democrats' efforts to exact electoral revenge, which one White House aide told *The New York Times* was President Clinton's "personal crusade." Representative Tom Davis, chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), called Rogan's reelection bid "probably the premier House race" and argued that the congressman's defeat would be a "setback for the country." Hastert and House Majority Leader Dick Armey—not to mention top Republican senators like Kay Bailey Hutchison and Phil Gramm—hosted fund-raisers for Rogan around the country.

On the other hand, Republicans sure do like the money they get from pro-Turkish interests. In this election cycle, Boeing, General Dynamics, and Raytheon have already given more than $500,000 in soft money to the GOP, while Chevron has approached that figure on its own. Something has to give. And it looks as if it's going to be Jim Rogan.

It wasn't long after impeachment that Democratic State Senator Adam Schiff—sensing the two-term Rogan's vulnerability—announced that he'd challenge Rogan in 2000. Both men have had no trouble vacuuming up impeachment-generated campaign contributions. As of July, the two had raised a combined total of more than $7.5 million, which puts their race on track to become the most expensive in the history of the House.

Yet, while impeachment clearly drives both candidates' fund-raising, the race long ago ceased to hinge on Rogan's role in the affair. Most voters, after all, made up their minds on impeachment long ago and don't want to revisit it. In fact, with few people undecided on the subject, both candidates have de-emphasized impeachment rather than risk alienating voters by rehashing it.

Enter the Armenians, who make up about 15 percent of registered voters in Rogan's district. Although Armenian-Americans were once a reliable Republican vote because of the GOP's anti-Communist credentials, the younger, post-cold-war generation increasingly leans Democratic. Of the 7,000 to 9,000 Armenian-Americans who have added their names to the election rolls in Rogan's district since the last congressional election, Democrats narrowly edge out Republicans, 34 percent to 33 percent.

But for Armenian voters one issue trumps partisan affiliation: the genocide. "[The genocide] is a visceral issue that unites all Armenians," explains a Democratic consultant close to the Schiff campaign, "from [Republican former California Governor George] Deukmejian to people on the left." So, with his campaign foundering—Rogan came in two points behind Schiff in the district's open primary in March, and the Democratic registration advantage is expected to increase by several thousand before Election Day—Rogan seized the genocide issue. In April, the congressman, who had never before taken a lead on the genocide issue, cosponsored a measure requiring the United States officially to recognize the Armenian genocide. Although only symbolic—the president already memorializes the tragedy with an annual statement; he just doesn't call it a genocide—the measure was immediately embraced by the Armenian community. The only question was how much Hastert would do to support it.

Not much, Republican officials figured, assuming the

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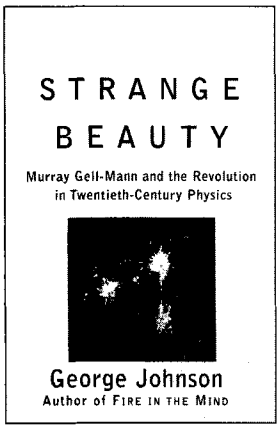

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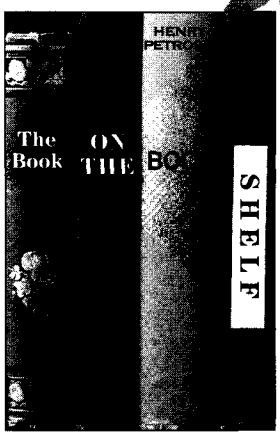

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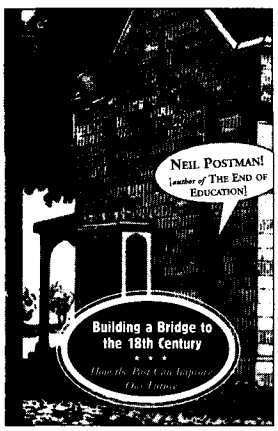

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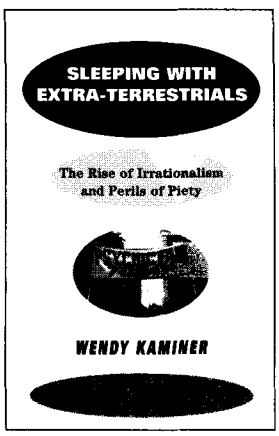

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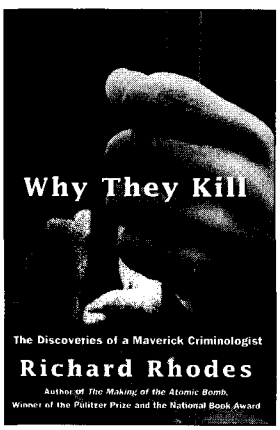
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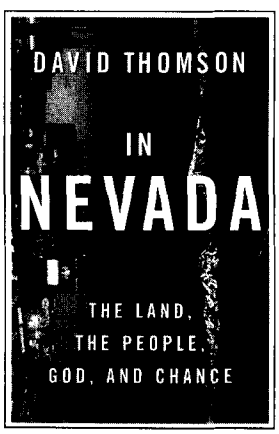

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congressional leadership would pull something out of the old Clinton playbook: feel the Armenians' pain without promising anything. But Hastert's commitment to a floor vote made that much harder. According to one former Republican representative, Armey and House Majority Whip Tom DeLay "were absolutely stunned that Hastert took this step." One Republican aide reports that Hastert's own staff "went into a complete panic."

But, before Hastert could retract his promise, Armenians were already celebrating him as their newfound savior. Less than 24 hours after Hastert's appearance, news of his pledge was running on all three local Armenian-language TV stations, and it generated a barrage of attention in the Armenian print media. A quote by the chairman of the Armenian National Committee of America in the English-language Armenian daily *Asbarez* was typical: "[We] are extremely pleased with Speaker Hastert's promise ... it is reassuring that the House leadership has committed itself to the mandate of bringing the genocide resolution to a successful vote."

Naturally, none of this sat very well with the defense contractors and the oil companies—not to mention the Turkish government, which has signed up onetime speaker-designate Bob Livingston and former Rules Committee Chairman Gerald Solomon (each for a reported $700,000) to lobby against the measure. Not that Livingston and Solomon have had to lobby their old GOP colleagues too hard: With millions of dollars in future campaign contributions at stake, few Republicans are eager to fall on their swords for a single colleague, even if control of the House hangs in the balance.

So the new strategy appears to be to bring the bill to the floor, but in a form that will doom it to failure (such as making it a "suspension vote," which would require a two-thirds majority for passage). Along with a healthy dose of spin, such a move would at once fulfill Hastert's promise and allow Rogan to claim victory in defeat. Indeed, the spin has already begun. As DeLay's deputy chief of staff, Tony Rudy, proclaims, "It's a Herculean effort by Rogan just to get a vote ... he can't control the way members [with] parochial concerns vote on this." Chimes in Rogan's campaign manager, Jason Roe: "The biggest struggle is just to get a vote."

ALAS, ROGAN MAY not get even that. At last week's International Relations Committee markup of the genocide measure, which Livingston and Solomon attended, the bill's opponents (among them Republican Representatives Doug Bereuter and Dan Burton and Democrat Tom Lantos) argued against the legislation for four hours—until the committee decided to postpone the vote. The bill did subsequently pass the committee. But with the October recess approaching—and Hastert, already burned once, unwilling to intervene—the bill's opponents may successfully stall a floor vote until the clock runs out, with devastating results for Rogan. "[Rogan] and the speaker both promised that they would get this to the floor for a vote," says Alex Sardar, an official of the Armenian National Committee, the nation's largest Armenian advocacy group (which has endorsed Schiff). "That's what the Armenian community is going to hold him to."

But, even if the GOP pulls off its fig-leaf strategy—sending a bill to the floor and ensuring that it loses there—Rogan still may not emerge unscathed. Armenian-Americans have a long history of disappointment on the genocide issue, and it would hardly be the first time a bill on the topic had come to the floor only to go down in orchestrated defeat. Many would see through the GOP's attempt to finesse the issue. Warns Ara Khachatourian, editor of *Asbarez*: "The community will realize it was something done in the eleventh hour for the elections." Perhaps Rogan should have stuck to impeachment after all. ■

Does the Supreme Court value privacy?

Here's Looking At You

By JEFFREY ROSEN

AS ITS NEW term began this week, the Supreme Court heard two cases involving the boundaries of privacy in an increasingly transparent society; later in the term, it will hear at least one more. The constitutional question in all three cases is whether the government needs to have individualized suspicion before it can conduct searches using relatively unintrusive, extremely effective technologies—thermal-imaging devices that can detect heat emitting through house walls, for example, or random checkpoints with drug-sniffing dogs. The cases allow the Court to grapple with an injury that is similar, but not identical, to one the Fourth Amendment's Framers meant to prohibit: the indignity of living in a zero-tolerance society, in which there is no place to hide from the all-seeing gaze of the state.

At the time the Constitution was written, the classic examples of unreasonable searches were the writs of assistance and general warrants that had allowed agents of the crown to break into the homes of American colonists and riffle through their private papers. These searches were very intrusive (involving physical trespass into the most private corners of the home), not very effective (requiring the seizure of many innocent papers in the course of discovering suspicious ones), and extremely arbitrary (allowing officers complete discretion in deciding which places should be searched and which persons or things should be seized).

At first glance, the mass searches made possible by twenty-first-century technology avoid these unpleasant side effects. Consider, for example, the virtual speed traps many cities are today setting up. Drivers exceeding the speed limit have their license plates and faces photographed automatically and later receive tickets in the mail. Unlike the eighteenth-century writs of assistance, these searches are not at all arbi-

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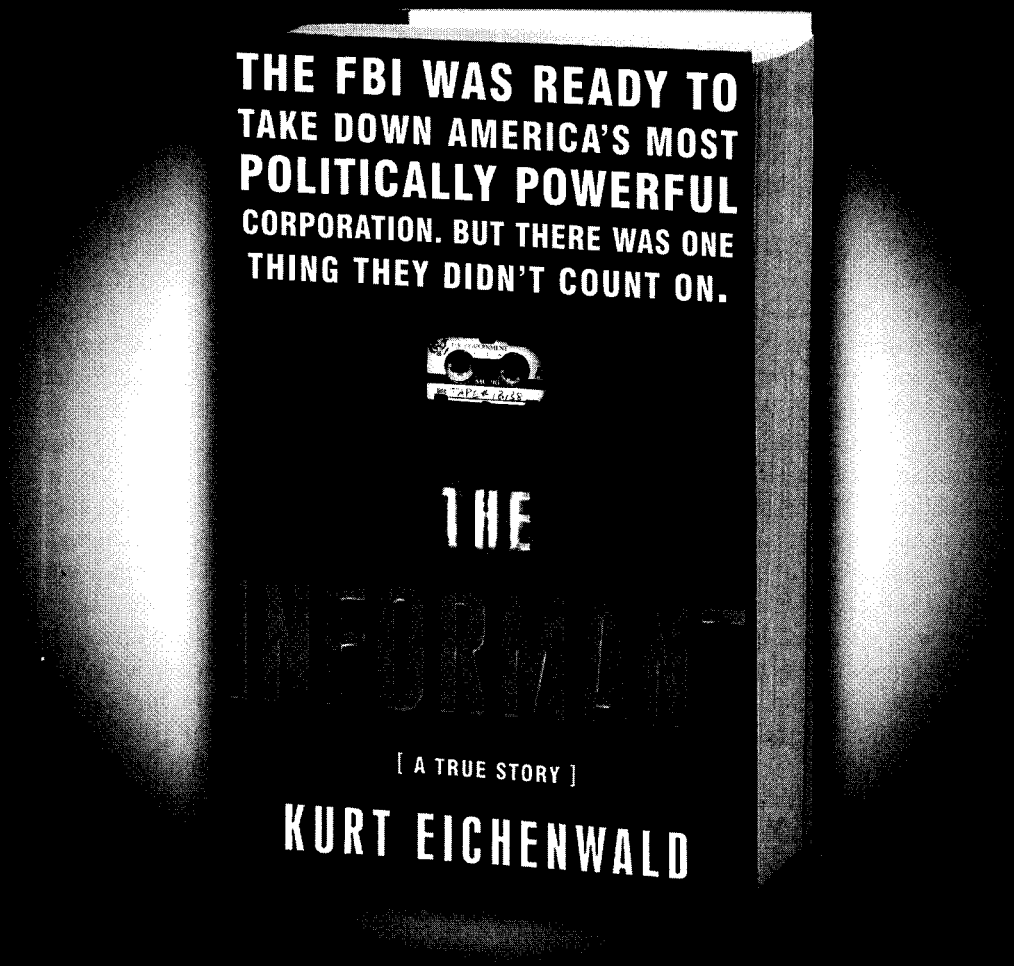
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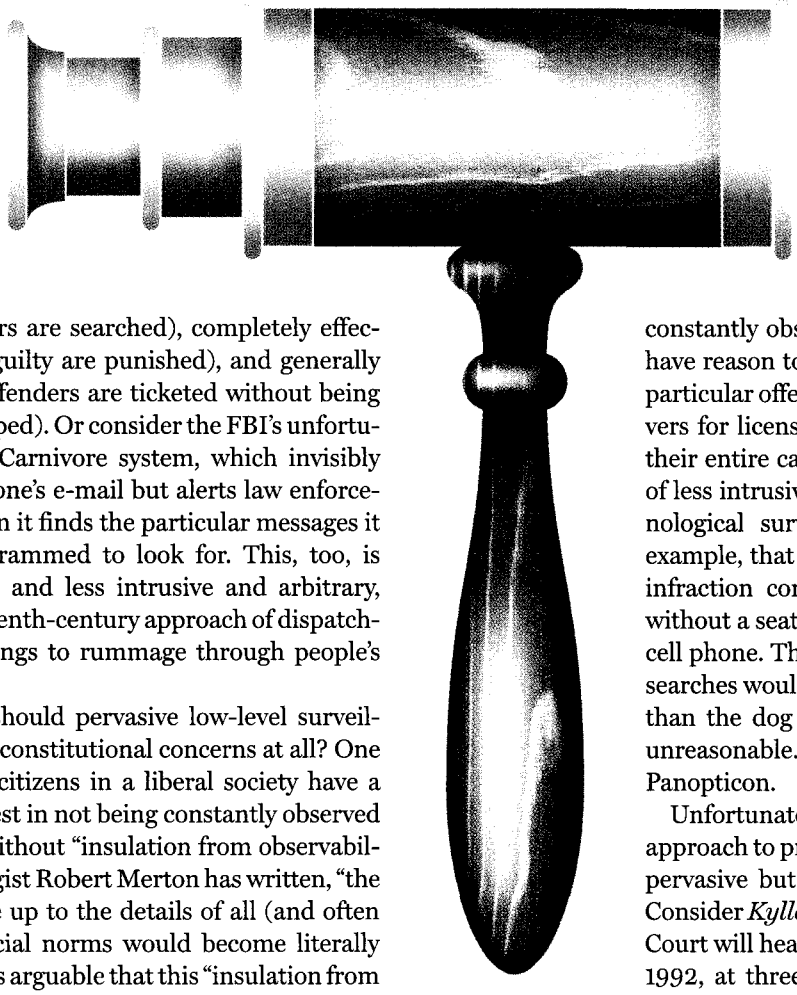

LLOYD MILLER

trary (all drivers are searched), completely effective (only the guilty are punished), and generally unintrusive (offenders are ticketed without being physically stopped). Or consider the FBI's unfortunately named Carnivore system, which invisibly searches everyone's e-mail but alerts law enforcement only when it finds the particular messages it has been programmed to look for. This, too, is more effective, and less intrusive and arbitrary, than the eighteenth-century approach of dispatching human beings to rummage through people's desk drawers.

Why, then, should pervasive low-level surveillance raise any constitutional concerns at all? One reason is that citizens in a liberal society have a powerful interest in not being constantly observed by the state. Without "insulation from observability," the sociologist Robert Merton has written, "the pressure to live up to the details of all (and often conflicting) social norms would become literally unbearable." It's arguable that this "insulation from observability," rather than a mere ban on arbitrary searches, was a core value the Fourth Amendment's Framers intended to protect. They believed, for example, that searches of private papers, even with warrants, were unconstitutional, and they accepted some measure of seditious libel because they felt freedom would be threatened if state agents could read citizens' diaries and spy on them in their bedrooms.

UNFORTUNATELY, TODAY'S COURTS have been slow to translate this antipathy to pervasive surveillance for a world in which the greatest threats to privacy are virtual rather than physical. On Tuesday, the Supreme Court heard a case that will determine whether the Indianapolis police department violated the Fourth Amendment when, during four months in 1998, it set up roadblocks on city streets and led drug-sniffing dogs around more than 1,000 cars. The Court has already approved the use of random checkpoints to catch drunk drivers and stop illegal immigrants at the border. And lawyers for the city argued that since police have the authority to stop cars to check drivers' licenses and registrations, they should be free to add the drug sniffs. "So long as they have the authority to stop the car, what difference does it make if they have another purpose?" asked Justice Antonin Scalia. But, as Chief Judge Richard A. Posner of the U.S. Court of Appeals in Chicago noted in striking down the program, the main purpose behind it was catching drug offenders, not checking licenses. Furthermore, citizens have a powerful countervailing interest in not being constantly observed on the road unless the police have reason to suspect them of having committed particular offenses. If the Court lets police stop drivers for license checks as an excuse for searching their entire cars, this will inevitably speed the use of less intrusive but more pervasive forms of technological surveillance: automated cameras, for example, that can record and ticket every possible infraction committed in your car, from driving without a seat belt on to driving while talking on a cell phone. These invisible and ruthlessly accurate searches would be less intrusive and more effective than the dog sniffs, but they would be similarly unreasonable. We don't want to live in Bentham's Panopticon.

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court's current approach to privacy may be too wooden to regulate pervasive but unobtrusive forms of surveillance. Consider *Kyllo* v. *United States*, a case the Supreme Court will hear later this term. One day in January 1992, at three o'clock in the morning, an officer from the Oregon National Guard sat in an unmarked car and aimed a thermal-imaging device at three houses, including that of Danny Lee Kyllo, who was suspected of growing marijuana with high-intensity lights. With the thermal-imaging device, Kyllo's walls "showed much warmer" than the other two houses, according to an officer; this evidence was used to get a warrant to search Kyllo's house, where officers found the suspected pot. Kyllo challenged the thermal-imaging device as an unreasonable search, but the appellate court ultimately rejected his claim, holding that Kyllo had no legitimate expectation that privacy extended to the heat waves being emitted from his house: He had voluntarily exposed those heat waves to public view, in the same way people choose to put out the trash.

This can't be right. Heat waves, unlike trash, aren't put out; they are emitted without human effort. The question is whether citizens in a civilized society are entitled to expect that their government isn't lurking in front of their homes and peering through their walls without proper cause. If the Supreme Court approves the use of thermal imaging without a warrant to investigate infractions as minor as growing marijuana (as four appellate courts have done), Americans will have no way to be certain that their most intimate movements at home aren't being recorded by hidden sensors. And this uncertainty will inhibit our freedom and autonomy in spaces that should be considered private.

The third privacy case, argued at the Court this Wednesday, asks whether police in Charleston, South Carolina, violated the Fourth Amendment by developing a policy with a

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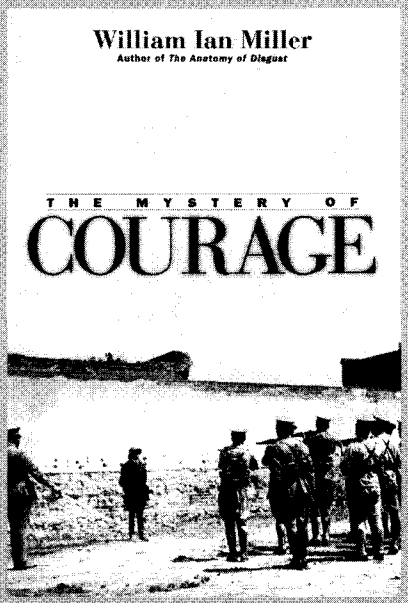

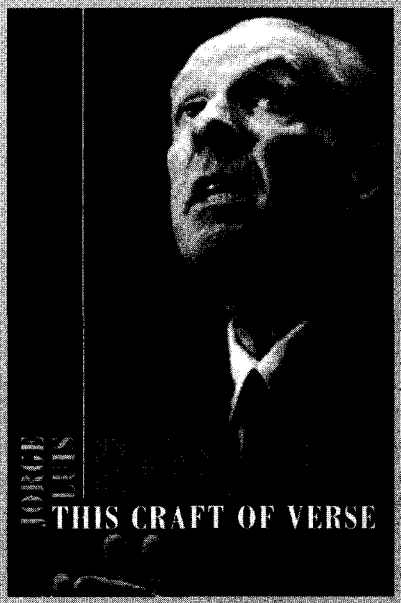

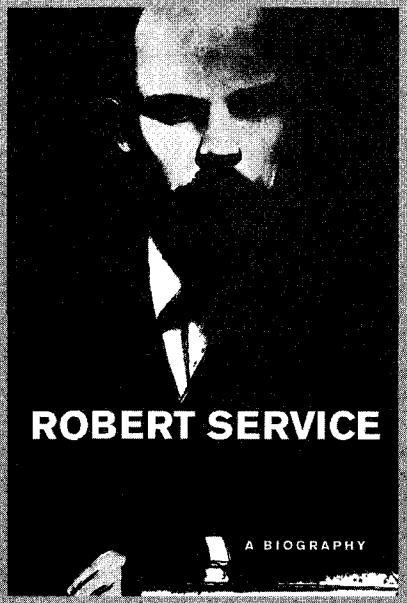

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city hospital to test the urine of pregnant women suspected of using cocaine and, without their consent, turn the results over to law enforcement officials, who would sometimes arrest them as they left the delivery room. An appellate court upheld the policy, arguing that urinalysis is very reliable and not very intrusive and that its purpose was not to enforce the drug laws but to protect the fetus, which is considered a "person" under South Carolina law. But, as Justice Stephen Breyer noted at the oral argument, the American Medical Association allows doctors to collect intimate medical information and turn it over to the police without consent only in a few special circumstances—when a patient is threatening serious and imminent bodily harm to herself or a third party. In this case, several of the arrests took place *after* the children were born, which means that any damage had already taken place. Scalia responded that doctors are required by law to report evidence of gunshot wounds, which, similarly, seems more investigative than protective. But a doctor seeing a gunshot wound while examining a patient is like a cop seeing a bloody knife in the backseat while issuing a speeding ticket: It's strong evidence of violent crime, discovered in plain view. South Carolina, by contrast, has enlisted doctors as agents of the police and directed them to conduct intimate medical tests for the sole purpose of protecting third parties. With or without a warrant, state hospitals should not be allowed to test suspected drug users for HIV and then turn the test results over to the police for release to the patient's known sexual partners. Urinalysis, moreover, is already being superseded by more sophisticated forms of medical surveillance; it may soon become routine for hospitals to make genetic maps of DNA samples to determine an individual's predisposition for various diseases—or even for future violence. If the results of these tests could be turned over to state agents without consent, individuals would lose control over the most basic markers of their identity. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a far slighter invasion—state scrutiny of a diary—was held to violate the Fourth and Fifth Amendments.

THERE ARE COSTS, of course, to prohibiting pervasive, highly effective, and relatively unobtrusive surveillance. If the state is forbidden to search everyone for drugs with dogs and urine tests, it may be more likely to target a few poor, minority suspects with battering rams and street arrests. But although the new technologies of pervasive surveillance might reduce discriminatory law enforcement, they threaten liberty in a subtler but more encroaching way: by making all citizens feel they have no escape from constant observation by the state. Some democracies passively accept these technological encroachments in the name of security: Britain, increasingly, has cameras on street corners. But the roots of our Anglo-American constitutional tradition reflect a horror of this kind of totalizing state control. By rejecting the zero-tolerance model, a liberal state treats its citizens as individuals rather than objects. If, by contrast, the Supreme Court abandons the principle that the state needs identifiable suspicion of serious wrongdoing before it can engage in pervasive surveillance, our Constitution in the twenty-first century will protect far less privacy than it did in the eighteenth. ■

Jerusalem Dispatch

French Hill

By YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

JERUSALEM

TONIGHT IT IS quiet outside my window. No ambulances, no helicopters, no thuds from exploding tear-gas canisters. Even the call of the muezzin in the Arab village on the next hill is subdued. For a moment my neighborhood, French Hill, is simply a middle-class Jewish enclave where cars bear stickers extolling pluralism and peace. And I can forget that I live at the very edge of northeastern Jerusalem, beyond which lies the West Bank.

Yesterday someone smashed car windshields in French Hill; today police found a Molotov cocktail in the bushes, waiting to be retrieved. My neighbor, a passionate supporter of the peace process, now says that if Prime Minister Ehud Barak fulfills his intention to transfer to Yasir Arafat the two Palestinian villages that border our neighborhood, he's leaving. "How will I bring my children to the park with Palestinian police on the next hill?" he asks. On a wall in our shopping center someone has written, in huge letters, RABBI KAHANE WAS RIGHT.

Here the personal and the political are interchangeable: You enter the supermarket and everyone looks the way you feel. Beyond fear, there is despair—about whether we can endure indefinite conflict; about whether we will ever find our home in the Middle East; about the viability of the Zionist enterprise, which remains, a half-century after Israel's founding, an experiment. What follows are some fragments from the war between my hill and the hill next door.

YASIR ARAFAT: From the beginning of the Oslo peace process, Arafat repeatedly promised Palestinian crowds he would lead a jihad for Jerusalem, and now it has begun. Leaders of Tanzim, the Fatah militia that led the attacks on Israeli outposts, say they were encouraged by Arafat. And, at some locations, rioters were even brought to the scene by Arafat's armed forces.

This week's uprising wasn't a response to Likud leader Ariel Sharon's reckless visit to the Temple Mount but to Barak's refusal to surrender the mount to exclusive Palestinian sovereignty. Arafat is trying to win concessions through televised pictures of dead Palestinians that he couldn't win through negotiations at Camp David.

And blackmail, after all, has been his approach to the peace process from the beginning. In the mid-'90s, according to the generally pro-Oslo Israeli military intelligence, Arafat gave Hamas the green light to bomb Israeli targets. He then pointed to the terrorists as the alternative awaiting Israel unless it bolstered him through additional concessions. Now, though, the false dichotomy between Arafat and the Palestinian "enemies of peace" is over; the blackmail tactics have become overt. We can expect that failure to accept Arafat's

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The book business is changing...and it's changing in good ways for people with interests beyond the bestsellers-of-the-moment. Good books like the ones PublicAffairs is publishing this fall sometimes used to be hard to find. But now there are a lot of ways to get the book you want:

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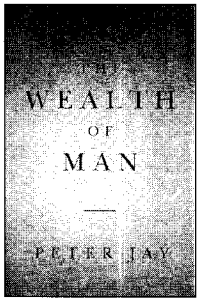

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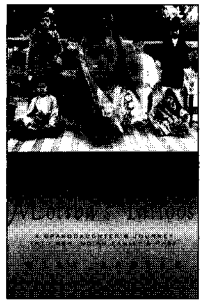

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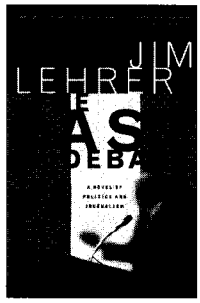

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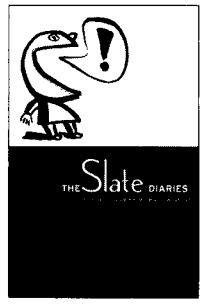

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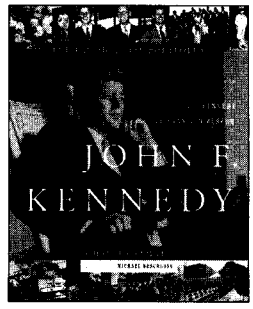

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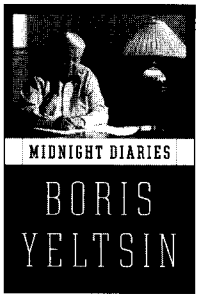

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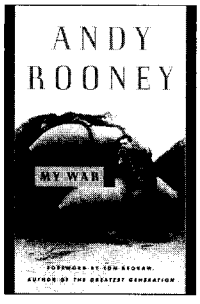

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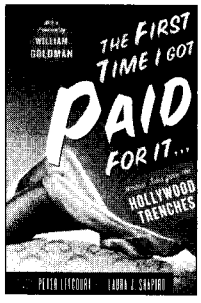

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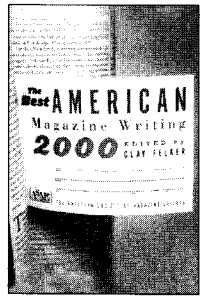

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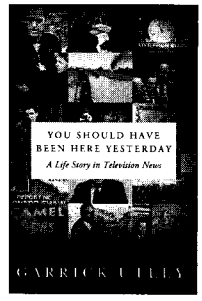

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demands will result in further attacks by his militias—still absurdly referred to by journalists as "police." Arafat no longer needs Hamas; his own soldiers are now leading the clashes he assumes will intimidate an exhausted Israeli public and force Barak to concede even more.

EHUD BARAK: Though he temporarily cornered Arafat at Camp David, it is Barak who now faces excruciating choices. He has already revealed his bottom-line concessions, including Palestinian control of the Old City's Muslim and Christian quarters and shared sovereignty over the Temple Mount. Arafat is also demanding the Armenian quarter—part of which is entwined with the Jewish quarter—and exclusive control of the mount. Barak, whose Camp David concessions alone probably couldn't have survived an Israeli referendum, has nothing left to give. His only hope for a deal is to defer a solution on Jerusalem and yield most of the West Bank in exchange for a temporary end to the violence. In other words, land for nothing.

If he does reach an interim deal with Arafat, Barak's minority government will depend on the support of the nine members of the Knesset's three Arab parties. That risks delegitimizing the deal among Jewish voters, who strongly mistrust the Arab parliamentarians—one of whom, Abdel Malik Dahamshe, hangs a photograph of Hamas leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin in his living room. For their part, the Arab Knesset members may well refuse to support a government that sanctioned shooting at rioters, anyway.

Barak's alternative is a national unity government with the Likud. But that means risking the secession of Labor's left wing and conceding the failure of Oslo—which he isn't yet prepared to do. Indeed, in a pathetic replay of his misreading of the late Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, Barak has told confidants that Arafat may finally be ready to compromise, because he's now proved his bravado. Still, Barak hasn't ruled out a unity government. Tellingly, he didn't condemn Sharon for provoking the violence; and several of Barak's closest political allies pointedly exonerated the Likud leader and blamed Arafat instead.

JERUSALEM: Barak's suggestions for sharing Jerusalem with Arafat, hardly popular to begin with, will now face even stiffer domestic opposition. More than ever, Israelis want separation from the Palestinians and are likely to support withdrawal from most of the territories for that reason. But shared rule in Jerusalem means greater intimacy with Arafat's regime. The rationale for continuing the Oslo process is divorce; yet what Barak is proposing in Jerusalem is, in effect, marriage.

This week's violence in Jerusalem was largely confined to riots, which Israel quickly subdued; but shoot-outs lasted for days in the West Bank and Gaza, precisely because the territories contain Palestinian militias. After watching those televised scenes, most Israelis are now wary of transferring authority over any part of Jerusalem to Arafat. The logic is straightforward: While it's true that few Jews enter Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem, at least Arafat's soldiers don't, either.

ARAB ISRAELIS: Along with "peace process" and "Palestinian police," this week's armed intifada has discredited the term "Arab Israeli." Since the first intifada, in the late '80s, and especially since Oslo, Israel's Arabs have undergone a series of linguistic redefinitions, moving from "Palestinian Israelis" to "Palestinian citizens of Israel" to "Palestinians who live in Israel." Members of a 1997 delegation of Palestinian Israeli leaders to Assad accepted the Syrian president's definition of them as the "Arabs of 1948," eliminating Israel altogether.

Of all Israel's social failures, the most tragic is its inability to offer Arab citizens genuine equality and a minimal connection to its national identity. To some extent, the alienation of Israel's Arabs was inevitable: They are, after all, a unique minority, at once surrounded by the Jewish majority and part of the regional majority that surrounds the Jewish state—concentric circles of siege. Yet Jewish Israel hasn't encouraged positive trends within the Arab minority—which through the '90s was paradoxically becoming politically Palestinian but culturally Israeli. Now even that fragile cultural opening for a common identity between Israel's Arabs and Jews has been drastically undermined.

Arab spokesmen insist their community's violence wasn't motivated so much by Palestinian nationalism as by frustration with Arabs' second-class status—by a desire to become more, not less, a part of Israeli society. Yet, by timing their protests to coincide with the Palestinian attacks in the territories, the rioters within Israel only reinforced the long-standing Jewish fear that their fellow Arab citizens are a potential fifth column.

Barak may want to soothe Arab voters—who were crucial to his election—by finally ending discrimination in government funding to the Arab sector and perhaps even appointing the country's first-ever Arab Cabinet minister. But, after this week, those gestures would likely be dismissed by many Arabs as belated tokenism and by many Jews as appeasement of violence. On this issue, as well, Barak can no longer win.

THE GREEN LINE: Oslo was intended to revive the pre-1967 border, and, at Camp David, Barak came close to doing just that, agreeing to withdraw from more than 90 percent of the territories and compensate Palestinians with additional territory inside Israel proper. Yet, while Oslo legitimized the green line for many Jews, it had precisely the opposite effect on Israel's Arabs, encouraging their identification with the Palestinian state emerging just across the border. Even at the height of the first intifada, which preceded Oslo, Israel's Arabs largely refrained from violence. Yet this week the attacks spread from the territories across the international border to the Galilee, where rioters blocked major roads and are reported to have set fires across the region. Suddenly the Israeli right's great fear—that the Palestinian state won't cease its territorial demands at the 1967 border but will revive the 1947 U.N. partition plan that awarded the western Galilee to the Palestinians—no longer seems so paranoid.

THE GALILEE: Until this week, whenever Jews needed to escape the congestion of Tel Aviv and the tensions of Jerusalem, they headed for the Galilee, the one place where

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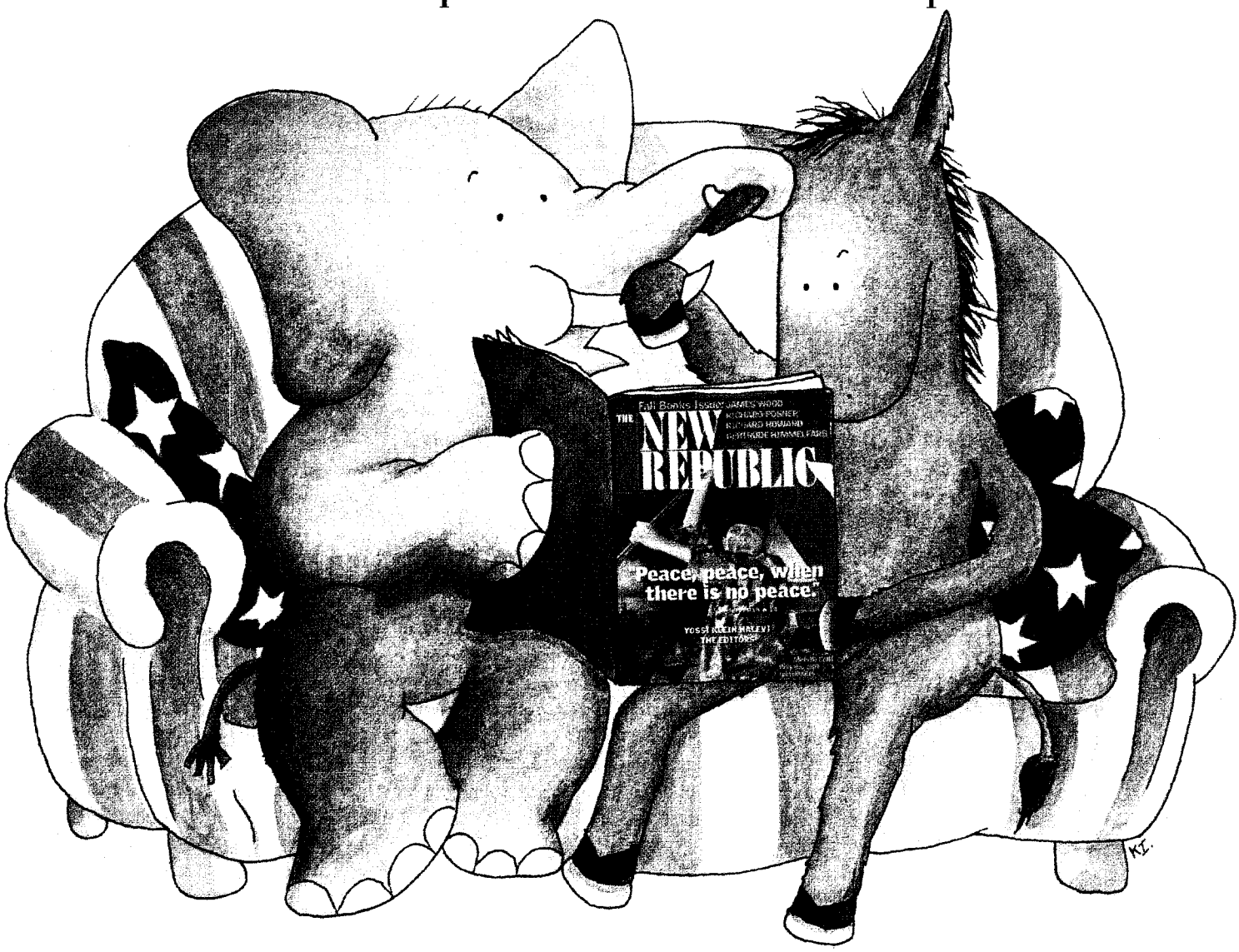

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Arab-Jewish coexistence seemed to work. They searched Arab villages for the best olive oil and hummus, imagining themselves at home in the Middle East. But now the Galilee is under siege—from without by rock throwers on the Lebanese border, from within by Arab residents. For many Jews, the map of Israel has suddenly contracted, and the Arab Galilee is now as untouchable as the West Bank. This new fear will mean less sympathy for the Arab struggle for equality.

HEZBOLLAH: Palestinian rioters repeatedly chanted Hezbollah's name, invoking its victory over Israel as an omen for their own battle. Indeed, the Israeli retreat from Lebanon is at least partly responsible for the latest violence: For months Palestinians have been citing the Hezbollah model as the most effective way to win territory from Israel. Hezbollah may be tempted to prove its continued viability by staging solidarity attacks on the northern border. Barak has repeatedly said he will hold Damascus responsible for any Hezbollah attacks and will retaliate against Syrian military targets. That could lead to a regional war. The real front to watch, then, isn't Gaza but Lebanon.

A NEW ISRAELI CONSENSUS? The first intifada proved the bankruptcy of Greater Israel; the new intifada has done the same for the peace process. The slogans from the right-wing protest campaigns of the early '90s suddenly seem prophetic: "Don't give them guns," "This is not peace," and, most chilling, "Yesha [Judea and Samaria] is here." This past week, the chaos of Yesha was indeed everywhere.

If Labor and Likud form a national unity government, it may choose the only option we've ever really had: unilateral withdrawal to essential borders defined by national consensus. Israel would then retrench the settlers into defensible blocks, ensure its continued rule over united Jerusalem, and allow the Palestinians to govern themselves—precisely the solution Barak offered in the 1999 elections, minus a peace treaty. Imposing a unilateral solution would, of course, mean the end of negotiations and the continuation of conflict. But it would face the essential truths of Israel's left and right—that we can't occupy the Palestinians, and we can't make peace with them. ■

Hillary's new friend.

The Courtship

By DAVID GRANN

"I'M ON THE record. D'ya hear me? I'm on the record. Dov Hikind is a self-anointed power broker and kingmaker. He's a political cross-dresser. He's not a man of enormous scruples or morals. He looks for a parade and runs to the front of it and declares he's leading it. He's a craven opportunist—d'ya hear me? An insufferable egomaniac."

Thus David Luchins, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's ordinarily discreet aide, sums up Dov Hikind, the Brooklyn assemblyman Hillary Clinton has been anxiously courting as part of her effort to woo New York's Orthodox Jews. Outside the parochial world of New York ethnic politics, Dov Hikind is unknown. But within it he occupies an almost mythic role. He is the closest thing to an Al Sharpton of the Jews: a child of Holocaust survivors who has assiduously cultivated a power base inside his ethnic enclave of black hats and *payos* by seizing on almost any perceived injustice to Israel or the Jewish people. No one knows how many votes he actually controls, but he is believed to command, or at least influence, tens of thousands of religious Jews, almost all in Brooklyn.

It is, by most standards, a small and insignificant army. But within New York politics it is considered indispensable. Many of the Orthodox vote in an organized bloc and, unlike other ethnic groups and their more secular Jewish brethren, swing from Democratic to Republican. What's more, outsiders—be they the political consultants who run New York campaigns or the pundits who pontificate about them—find the ultra-Orthodox world largely impenetrable, a place where married women wear wigs and families do not own televisions. Since the ultra-Orthodox view secular politicians with deep suspicion and eschew much of the secular media, communicating directly with ultra-Orthodox voters is almost impossible. Politicians and their aides feel they need a guide, someone to make their case in precincts where they cannot. And candidates for every office from governor down to city council have come to believe there is only one person who can effectively do that: Dov Hikind.

As a result, the courtship of Hikind has become an elaborate, familiar, and infuriating New York ritual. Hikind will withhold his support until the final weeks before an election, eliciting more and more promises from both sides, until finally, at the last minute, he leaves one candidate standing alone, arms outstretched, at the altar. After Governor Mario Cuomo was jilted in such fashion in 1994, someone in his office or campaign released to the *Forward* what has since become known as the "Hikind Files." Comprising "confidential" memos and correspondence between the governor and the assemblyman, they show how Hikind, in the words of the paper, "teased and tormented the Cuomo entourage for months into believing he was ready to endorse the incumbent governor for a fourth term—if only they met his demands." In the memos, Hikind sought, among other things, the accreditation of his district's Syrit trade school, which had repeatedly violated state regulations and was

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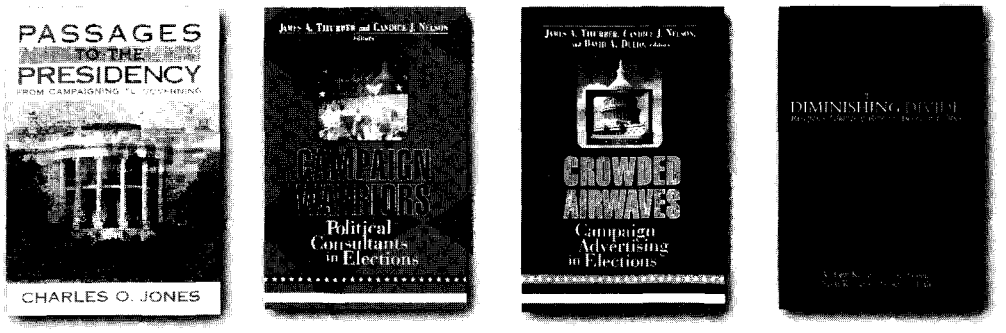

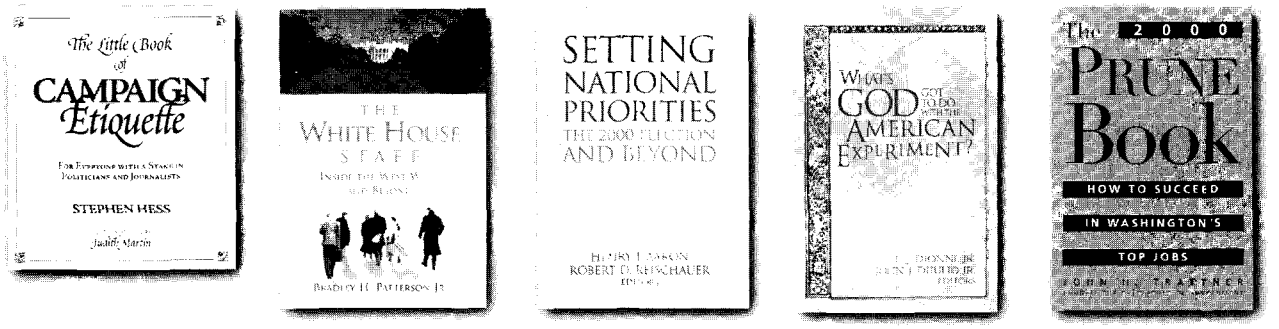
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run by a key Hikind fundraiser—a man who would eventually land in jail for stealing more than $700,000 from the school. (In 1998, another Hikind associate would plead guilty to a crime—this time for attempting to bribe the assemblyman. But Hikind himself was acquitted after his lawyer argued that he took the money without "corrupt intent.")

DREW FRIEDMAN

After Hikind and the governor met in February 1994, a Cuomo aide sent a memo to the governor's chief of staff saying the meeting had been so "positive" that Hikind had agreed to support Cuomo. Yet, several months later, Hikind told a reporter he was now considering endorsing the governor's GOP rival, George Pataki. And, as if to underscore the threat, he added that Cuomo had "insulted" many Democrats. As the governor's campaign scrambled to placate him, Hikind played both sides, assuring Cuomo that he was still "leaning toward" endorsing him. But Cuomo refused to approve the Syrit school's application, and, though he insisted there was no quid pro quo, Hikind eventually threw his support behind Pataki, who went on to a stunning upset and subsequently accredited the school. (Pataki's administration also later hired Hikind's wife and brother.) "The thing about Hikind," said one government official who has dealt with him, "is that he always exacts a high price."

Indeed, like New York's other ethnic chieftains, Hikind occupies a subterranean political world. It is, by all accounts, a grubby, grimy, unedifying, petty little place. But it is there where all New York politicians must eventually go, and where Hillary Clinton, the president's wife and the only first lady ever to run for higher office, has been spending a remarkable amount of her time.

THE COURTSHIP BEGAN in April, while Hikind was visiting his dying father in the hospital. As he leaned over the bed, his cell phone rang. It took him a moment to realize the first lady was on the other end. I want to express my sympathy for your father, she said. Then she said they should meet. Soon.

"Look," he said. "I'm not interested in photo-ops, or in some kind of *ketubah*-signing for the cameras. If you really want to talk to me, it will be about the real issues that concern me."

Of all Hikind's courtships, this was certainly the most extraordinary. It was not just that Clinton was the first lady but that to many in the Orthodox community she was, as Hikind often told his friends, "the enemy." A former disciple of the extreme right-wing rabbi Meir Kahane, Hikind had one litmus test every candidate had to pass: unwavering, unconditional support for Israel. It was the central tenet of his politics. "I am a Jewish nationalist," he once said. "I don't believe in physically throwing out the Arabs from Israel, but I could support taking actions to encourage them to move."

Clinton's views on the subject could not have been more different. Hikind himself had called her "the foremost supporter of a Palestinian state in the United States" and Yasir Arafat's "number-one advocate." Last year, after Clinton hinted she might run for Senate, Hikind predicted the greatest abandonment by Jews of the Democratic Party in New York history. He printed 10,000 buttons urging the first lady not to run and dedicated his weekly radio show to her "love affair" with the PLO. Then, in November 1999, Clinton embraced Suha Arafat only moments after the wife of the Palestinian chairman had charged Israel with poisoning Arab children. "To listen to this kind of horrible anti-Semitic rhetoric and not say anything is immoral," Hikind told reporters. "[I]t's cowardice."

In fact, Hikind and the first lady disagree not only about Israel but about almost everything else as well—from affirmative action to vouchers to abortion to gay rights. Even their characters seem diametrically opposed: he the fast-talking, flamboyant pol who chained himself to Russian consulates around the world on behalf of Soviet Jewry; she the restrained Methodist who wears pearls and speaks in slow, scripted platitudes. After Hikind called on her to get out of the race, Clinton's spokesman, Howard Wolfson, retorted: "Dov Hikind endorsed [Republican] Al D'Amato over Chuck Schumer. He was wrong then, and he is wrong now." Many of her aides and informal advisers warned her to stay away from Hikind. One of them, Schumer, has described him publicly as "nasty and off-the-wall."

As the election neared, however, the first lady grew convinced, like so many candidates before her, that she needed Hikind—indeed, even more than the rest. In March, a Marist poll showed she was receiving less than 50 percent of the Jewish vote, a disastrously low number. To win, Clinton's advisers knew she needed at least 60 percent, and probably more than 70 percent—which was still less than Schumer got when he defeated D'Amato in 1998. Getting Hikind on board would be essential, argued State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, the Orthodox Democrat quietly assisting Hillary's Jewish outreach.

Yet, when the matter came up in internal meetings, Clinton's aides and informal advisers split into hostile camps,

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Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

Thanks, But No Thanks

By SANDRA FELDMAN, President
American Federation of Teachers

Become a teacher? Not likely. That's how most New York City teenagers responded to a recent poll asking them if they would be interested in a career as a city teacher. Although the majority of the young people, who included high school and college students, felt positive about the services their own teachers had provided, only 24 percent found teaching in New York City schools very, or even fairly, appealing.

There is little doubt that these results would be repeated in cities across the country—and who can blame the kids? Why should they want to enter a field where their work will get little recognition and their salaries will never approach what other professionals make?

So it's not hard to understand why young people—and talented ones in particular—don't even consider teaching. But the growing teacher shortage gives a new urgency to the situation, especially since it comes at a time when we are working hard to raise student achievement—and beginning to succeed. Will we be able to attract high-quality young teachers to public schools—and especially to schools in urban areas? The answer to that question depends to a large extent on what American voters do when they go to the polls for the November elections for local, state, and national offices.

The American people know that education is an important issue for the future of the nation; they've said so. And they overwhelmingly support public education. If they look carefully at the candidates, they will find clear differences among them at every level.

Talk Is Cheap

Some candidates who call themselves staunch supporters of education are nothing of the sort, and voters need to differentiate between the ones who talk a good game and those who understand public education and what it needs.

A clear, bright line separates candidates who favor a big tax cut—which would disproportionately benefit wealthy Americans—and the ones who want to make a major investment in education.

Real education candidates know that, along with high standards, we need better pay for teachers across the board. Real education candidates favor reducing class size, which improves student achievement, especially for poor minority children. And because they know that learning cannot take place unless kids feel safe and teachers are able to teach, they support policies that ensure orderly classrooms, including funding for quality alternative schools where seriously troubled students can be helped as they continue their education.

How can we attract more young people to teaching?

One big irony in the education debate is that the pseudo education candidates—the ones who say we really can't afford to spend more on education (though we can afford a big tax break)—are often the ones who favor vouchers—using public money to send kids to private schools. In other words, they think it's OK to siphon off money from the public schools that most youngsters attend in order to send just a few to private schools.

Achievement Is Up

This is especially misguided because the achievement trend is up in urban schools, thanks to our insistence on using proven programs. And I'm not talking about isolated success stories. There have been substantial districtwide improvements in cities where achievement was flat just a few years ago: Chicago, Boston, Hartford, Baltimore, Philadelphia. So we're not asking local, state, and federal governments to throw money at failing systems but to invest in their growing success and solidify the gains these schools are making.

Education is not the only big issue in the November elections. When we cast our votes, we'll also be deciding whether the budget surplus—instead of being squandered on tax cuts for the rich—will be targeted to programs that help working people, like a patients' bill of rights, prescription drugs under Medicare, and preserving Social Security rather than privatizing it.

We have clear choices up and down the line, from the people who are running for President to those aspiring to state houses or positions in local government. The question is whether we will go with candidates who want a government that promises to do as little as possible—especially for ordinary people—or go with candidates who want to invest in America. ▮

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with many vehemently opposed to any relationship with Hikind. According to people close to the campaign, Moynihan, Schumer, Clinton's consultants, and her Jewish liaison Karen Adler all spoke out against it. Many said it would look like the worst kind of pandering—as if she were courting Jerry Falwell, only worse. "I don't think it's becoming of her to be playing ball with a guy who in my mind is guilty of criminal behavior—though he got away with it," one informal Clinton adviser told the campaign.

But one day in April, undeterred, the first lady led her motorcade across the East River and into Jewish Brooklyn, past yeshivas and *shtieblach*—little, Hasidic-style synagogues—until it stopped in front of a small brick house, where Hikind was sitting shiva for his father. Wearing a plain black pantsuit, her hair neatly done up, the first lady approached the Brooklyn assemblyman and his mother. In the tradition of Jewish mourning, they were sitting low to the ground—and so Hillary got down on one knee. As she offered her condolences, Hikind rolled up his mother's sleeve. On her left forearm was the concentration-camp number the Nazis had tattooed at Auschwitz. "You see those numbers?" said Hikind. "That's who I am. That's what it's all about."

Clinton studied the tiny numbers, then said, "I understand." On her way out she slipped into a plate some money for one of the family's favorite charities, as is Jewish custom.

Later, Hikind seemed almost overcome. "She stayed at least thirty minutes, on her knees in front of my mother," he recalled. "The house was packed, nobody got up. Everyone was in shock: They had a front-row seat to Hillary Clinton." And she wasn't the only one who came to the Hikind house. "Everyone paid a shiva call ... I mean everybody. Mark Green, Alan Hevesi, Carl McCall. Everybody you could possibly think of. I'm not talking about assemblymen and others. I'm talking about major, major figures."

EVERYBODY EXCEPT ONE: Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Clinton's then-rival for the Senate seat, with whom Hikind had had a bitter falling out after the Brooklyn assemblyman switched his support from Cuomo (whom Giuliani backed) to Pataki. Giuliani paid his respects by fax.

In the days after her shiva call, Hikind's public assessments of the first lady's candidacy began to change. "She is a nice lady," he told reporters. "She's not anti-Israel by any means. She just has a point of view that's on the extreme left."

Then, while the first lady's campaign tried to arrange a sit-down meeting and Hikind stalled ("I wasn't in the mood," he explained), news broke that Clinton had allegedly called her husband's former campaign manager a "fucking Jew bastard." Despite the story's dubiousness, Hikind told reporters he believed she had made the remark. Still, he left a small, Hikind-like opening: "I'm not saying we should hang her for it," he said on his radio show. "I'm not saying we should call her an anti-Semite."

The controversy also left an opening for Representative Rick Lazio, who in May had suddenly replaced Giuliani as the Republican candidate for Senate and who didn't have the mayor's bitter history with Hikind. In August, Lazio planned a trip to the heart of Hikind's district—to Amnon's, a famous kosher pizza joint across the street from the assemblyman's office. But, despite his many years in New York politics, Lazio seemed unprepared for Hikind. "The day before he came, they called me up," recalled Hikind, "and they said, 'Hey, Rick is coming to have pizza at Amnon's. Why don't you come across and meet Lazio and say hello and so on.' I said, 'Listen, listen. First of all, I'm on a diet. I don't eat cheese pizza. I'm across the street. So come across the street.'"

Taken aback, Lazio's aides declined in a huff. "Even if we had wanted to, we didn't have time," said one aide, who castigated Hikind for his high-handedness.

"What was he going to do, have a picture with me eating pizza?" replied Hikind. "That's not what I do for a living ... and, by the way, when he walked in to eat pizza, no one was there. It was like eleven o'clock in the morning. They had to schlepp some people together to say hello to them."

THE FIRST LADY, meanwhile, forged ahead, even as more and more of her advisers urged her not to. On August 23, her campaign arranged a private meeting with Hikind in Sheldon Silver's Manhattan law office. Hikind showed up in a coat and tie, wearing his customary knitted blue yarmulke, his beard neatly trimmed. He brought a bag of kosher pretzels from Borough Park, which he passed around. For more than an hour they spoke, eating the pretzels along with bagels and lox and egg salad. Hikind sat with his two closest aides, Chief of Staff Simcha Felder and Communications Director Charni Sochet.

"A lot of things were said, which you or any reporter would love to know and would make major, major headlines," Hikind told me later, sitting in his Democratic Club office. ("If you found out," he had said earlier, "you'd win a Pulitzer.")

"I wish I had a video [of it]," observed Felder.

"[W]e hit it off," said Hikind. "I think she was shocked that anyone would talk to her [the way I did].... She was taken by someone coming in there and basically telling her what the facts of life were."

"I thought she was mesmerized," agreed Felder.

For his part, Clinton's spokesman, Wolfson, called the meeting "productive."

Within hours, speculation grew that, in exchange for Hikind's endorsement of the first lady, Democrats in the state legislature would, as part of next year's redistricting, redraw Brooklyn's districts to allow Hikind to secure a seat in Congress. "I hear there is a secret deal with him becoming a congressman," admitted a Clinton insider.

"It's the most disgusting thing I've ever heard," said a Lazio top aide.

"People will say Shelly this, Shelly that," replied Hikind, referring to the state assembly speaker and the purported deal. "They don't know what they're talking about."

What Hikind admitted he asked for, though, may be even more astounding: the release of a convicted traitor. "I told Hillary I have never seen a Democrat arouse as much anger as she does in a community of Democrats," said Hikind. "And the only way she can counterbalance that is to do some very dramatic things that she believes in to get across that she is not an enemy—that she is in fact a friend." The best way to do

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that, he told her, would be to persuade her husband to grant clemency to Jonathan Pollard, a Navy intelligence analyst who was caught in 1985 spying for Israel and has become a cause célèbre for some American Jews. Hikind said Pollard's release was a matter of principle: His life sentence was too severe, given that he had spied for an ally. Still, it was a stunning request—to ask, openly, that the first lady ask her husband to free a prisoner to boost her Senate campaign.

Clinton said she had not made up her mind on clemency. But the day after their meeting Hikind learned that Pollard was being moved to a more dangerous prison compound. He alerted the first lady, who immediately contacted what her campaign described as "White House officials." Within 24 hours the prison decided, for undisclosed reasons, not to move Pollard. "I don't want it to be that Dov Hikind is pulling strings," Hikind said afterward. "The bottom line of this is that she is clearly moving in the right direction."

Hikind seemed to be laying the groundwork for an endorsement. "Lazio's position on Pollard is totally preposterous," he told reporters again and again. "There are all kinds of things going on right now in terms of Israel. Where is this guy?"

Then, a few days later, Lazio called. He wanted to meet. Tomorrow. Hikind was jubilant. "I need some time to figure this all out," he told me that night. "I was flabbergasted. They suddenly reached out to me." At another point, sitting in his office eating kosher pretzels, he added: "Hillary Clinton is the wife of the president of the United States, and she's all over me. The Lazio people want to be all over me.... Everybody in town wants to know what Dov Hikind is going to do. It is the most remarkable thing. My brother goes to functions everywhere [and people say], 'What's your brother gonna do? Is he? Is he?'... I'm getting calls from all over the country.... I can't go into it, but I met with certain rebbes—major rebbes—not a rabbi of a synagogue but major rebbes. I've actually gotten the OK to do what I want to do. And I might talk about it in the end. Major, major." He paused, then added: "Look, as someone said to me, no one cares what [Jerry] Nadler does, no one cares what any of these other Jewish figures do—who cares about them? Isn't that interesting? Nadler—he's a Jew, [a congressman] ... all these local Jewish figures, I don't think anyone cares what they do.... But everyone wants to know what Dov Hikind, a little assemblyman from Borough Park, is going to do."

DOV HIKIND, IT seemed, always wanted to be a *macher*, the Yiddish word for "player," which he had heard since he was a child growing up in Brooklyn. In college he was drawn to Meir Kahane, the legendary rabble-rousing Brooklyn rabbi who founded the Jewish Defense League (JDL)—a militant pride movement whose slogan was "Every Jew a .22." Imitating his mentor, Hikind mastered karate and patrolled his neighborhood, protecting Jews from street crime and beating up, in his words, anti-Semitic "thugs who were looking for trouble."

While some in the JDL turned to greater and greater violence, including terrorist attacks on Soviet buildings, Hikind relied on something more creative: street theater. Developing the flair for drama and publicity that would mark his political career, Hikind joined scores of other young militants and repeatedly chained himself to Russian consulates to call attention to the plight of Soviet Jews. The group would alert reporters, who would appear in droves as the police carried Hikind and his colleagues away in cuffs. "I was never involved in any bombings or shootings," Hikind has said. "I still sympathize with the JDL [of the 1970s]. JDL's image [was] much worse than the group really [was].... There really is a time to be militant."

RELYING ON A mixture of militancy and savvy, Hikind slowly built a political fiefdom in Borough Park. After losing a race for city council, he ran for the state assembly in 1982 and won. While he spent little time in Albany toiling over the minutiae of legislation, over the next 18 years Hikind tended hyperkinetically to his constituents, fixing potholes and streetlights, dancing at the Bar Mitzvahs of supporters' children, and canvassing the district to register Jewish voters.

Just as he had with the JDL, Hikind developed a knack for putting himself in front of cameras. When racist vandals desecrated a Jewish shop, he demanded an investigation. When then-Mayor David Dinkins was slow to respond to the 1991 riots in Crown Heights, Hikind held a demonstration outside Gracie Mansion. In 1992, after Jerry Brown said he would choose Jesse Jackson as his vice presidential running mate, Hikind leaped to his feet at a Brown campaign event and yelled, "You disqualify yourself with the Jewish community."

Hikind's ubiquitous, voluble presence led outsiders to begin treating him as his community's spokesman. And he did little to discourage the impression. Soon he began saying things like *my community wants* or *my community feels*. Hikind usually describes himself as a conciliator, the person who constructively channels his people's anger in times of crisis. Last year, after New York City police shot and killed a mentally disturbed Orthodox man wielding a hammer, Hikind rushed into the crowd that spilled onto the streets and climbed atop a truck, begging the people assembled not to riot. Or at least that's how he describes it. The police commissioner accused Hikind of instigating the crowd.

But, like Sharpton—though with far more scruples—Hikind knows it is less important that outsiders deem him to be using his power constructively than that they believe he possesses it. And that is why Hikind's harshest words are reserved not for those who call him irresponsible—he generally views such charges as good fodder—but for those who call him impotent. Critics charge that, with his late endorsements, Hikind does not so much swing the ultra-Orthodox vote as follow it once the community has already made up its mind. And, even then, he doesn't always choose the right side. In 1997, when Hikind and the mayor were open enemies, Giuliani won 72 percent of the Jewish vote, compared with 65 percent in 1993, when Hikind actively campaigned for him. What's more, Giuliani carried Hikind's own Brooklyn district by an even higher margin in 1997, without Hikind's support. "His power is a myth of his own creation," said Bruce Teitelbaum, Giuliani's Jewish liaison and former campaign manager.

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But still the politicians come. Jeff Wiesenfeld, who worked with Hikind for years as a top aide to both Pataki and D'Amato, said, "The one thing that even his critics can't deny is his . . . ability to go far beyond the networking skills of ordinary people. . . . He is able through personal imagery and sharp political gamesmanship to convince public figures that they in fact need him and should therefore seek him out." He has become a higher form of operator, an ultra-*macher*. Hikind's lure is most potent, observers say, for the true outsider, the non-Jewish politician uninitiated in the rites of Borough Park—someone, say, like Clinton, who can imagine all the black hats rising at the nod of one man.

"Every Jew thinks they're a *macher*," Hikind said of his community. "How do you become one? Look, a lot of that is common sense. I am who I am." He paused, then confronted his critics, as if they had suddenly walked into the room. "But who are you? What are you? What credentials do you have?"

On one recent evening, Hikind invited me to sit in on his radio show. It broadcast on Saturday night, after the Sabbath ended, between 11 p.m. and midnight. After driving across the Brooklyn Bridge and snaking for nearly an hour through deserted streets, I was amazed to find the center of Borough Park teeming with people—men in black hats and long black overcoats, teenagers sprouting the first signs of beards, a woman with a wig carrying a loaf of bread. The commotion seemed to be centered around one building, and as I got out of the car and looked up at the sign, I realized it was Amnon's pizza joint.

The radio station was across the street, next to a bakery, and as I opened the door Hikind's chief of staff, Simcha Felder, appeared with a bag of the assemblyman's trademark pretzels. He led me upstairs. It was an old building, and the stairs creaked under our feet. Hikind campaign posters covered the walls, and it dawned on me that the building where the show was broadcast wasn't a radio station but a Democratic club.

Hikind was sitting in front of a microphone, preparing. He had on headphones, and his knitted blue yarmulke was clipped to his graying hair. "David, you sit here," he said with a smile, pointing next to him. "You want a drink?"

I shook my head and asked Hikind about the radio program. He said, with the kind of hyperbole to which I had, by now, become accustomed, that WMCA was a "major, major" station. "I'm shocked, traveling places, at the cross-section of people who come up to me and say they hear the show."

Hikind's aide Charni Sochet, who doubles as a co-host, sat across from him, working the control panel. "Will we get Hillary callers tonight?" I asked.

"You mean anti-Hillary," Hikind said. "We've been taking these phone calls for two weeks." He offered me a pretzel, then turned to Sochet. "We must mention the milk issue," he said, referring to the growing local crisis over the quality control of kosher milk. Then to me: "Nothing is sacred here. Anything goes. We'll pick at any subject. The milk issue, believe me, that's a very controversial issue."

Just before the show started, Hikind's wife, Shani, and several friends joined us around the table. "OK," Sochet said, holding up her hand. In my earphone I could hear a disembodied announcer say, "All Jewish, all night. . . . Stay tuned next for the Dovvvv Hiiiikind Show."

Sochet quickly pulled her mike under her chin. "We're here to discuss your thoughts, your views, and your ideas," she said. "Hi, Dov, *shavua tov*."

"Hi, Charni. Great to be back."

For a while they chatted amiably about milk and the Middle East, and I listened quietly, eating pretzels, watching through the window the throng of people across the street at Amnon's. Then, with a suddenness that surprised me, the conversation swung to the Senate race—how neither Clinton nor Lazio had condemned Arafat's latest anti-Israel rhetoric. Hikind's voice grew louder and fiercer as he demanded that both candidates respond. "No one," he said, "is taking me for granted." He took a deep breath. "Do we have some callers?"

Caller upon caller—Dan from Spring Valley, Shifra from Brooklyn—lambasted Hillary Clinton. Hikind tried to defend his decision to talk to her. "Oy, God. . . . Shifra, we're trying to get her to do something," he said of his discussions with Clinton. "Shifra, of course . . . OK, stop, Shifra. I condemn her for her association with Al Sharpton. Are you happy now?. . . What else do you want me to do?. . . I'm trying to do something that would be helpful to everyone."

After an hour of angry calls, the show ended, and Hikind leaned back in his chair, drained. He fell quiet for the first time. It was after midnight and I was starting to gather my things when suddenly Hikind's wife stood up. Her face was slightly flushed. "Why are you doing this?" she asked, turning to her husband. "Why are you even talking to her?"

Hikind seemed startled by the intensity of his wife's voice. "I'm just not making it easy for Lazio," he said. He saw me watching him. "And I'll say something else—and David is here, I'm saying this for the record. Depending on what happens in the next couple of weeks . . . Hillary Clinton could turn out to be a very good candidate."

"Well, that would be a real shocker, Dov," his wife said, her voice still taut.

"I'm telling you—and I've spent a couple of hours with her," he said defensively. "Can I tell you something? I've never felt more comfortable doing what I'm doing. I mean it very seriously. I know exactly what I'm doing."

"But why do you want to help her?" she pressed.

Hikind took a bite of a half-eaten pretzel. "Let's give them a problem here," he said, gesturing to the neighborhood. "Let them be concerned about us. That's my point." He paused, then added: "And by the way. After meeting with me, I can hurt Hillary more than ever before. What is her campaign going to do if I endorse Rick Lazio? 'Oh, we never really cared about Dov Hikind.' They've spent more time with me than with the entire Orthodox Union."

Finally, as the conversation petered out, I asked Hikind the same question everyone has been asking all summer and fall: Who is he going to endorse? "Yeah, who do you plan to endorse?" asked one of his friends. "Come on," said his wife. Hikind looked at the ceiling, as if searching for something, and then, as if he had found it, broke into a slight grin. "I'm not sure," he said. "I'm not sure." ■

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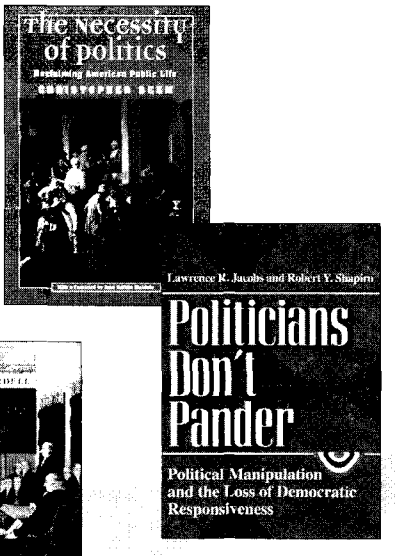
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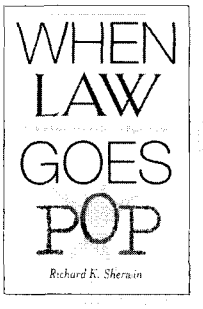

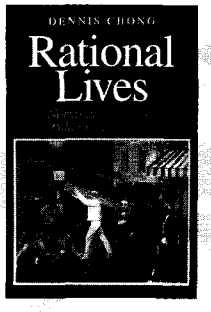

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

True and Utterly False

IT BEGINS WITH a shot of a double-decker army barracks filled with sleeping men. A voice on the sound-track says, "My father said that the army makes all men into one man, but you never know which one." A sergeant bursts in to wake the men with curses. Then **Tigerland** (20th Century Fox), a fiction film of open-pore realism, plunges into the training by which a company of recruits is bullied, shoved, and harried into becoming that one man. The war for which they are being trained is Vietnam.

The army's rationale for the rough training is, of course, that men in combat must be conditioned, and conditioned as a unit, so as to have the best chance to survive, to kill without being killed. In the midst of all the hacking and exhaustion, the men try to remember this. But they also know, as do we, that at this relatively late date—it is September 1971—they are being trained for a war that is politically and militarily bedraggled.

The place is Fort Polk, Louisiana. The recruits are told at the start that they will get eight weeks of training, then will be sent for another week to a military preserve called Tigerland where the conditions of risk and hardship are second only to Vietnam itself. We go the route with them. Some interludes occur when, with weekend passes, they drink and find women and fight among themselves; still, the picture's habitat is the corridor of training through which they are being hurtled toward that ambiguous war.

Films about military training are not scarce, but most of them are hard in manner and soft at the core, accounts of how seasoned commanders make tough soldiers out of civilian putty, with the men grateful and proud at the end. *Tigerland* shows us men more obedient than keen; yet, paradoxically, they share a growing awareness of group existence.

Within that group, differing sorts of spirits rise and fall. The screenplay by Ross Klavan and Michael McGruther, crammed with vitriolic dialogue, has as much plot as it needs to keep those fluctuations rolling. One soldier is the "problem" recruit: he often disobeys, is often sent to the stockade, yet remains stubborn. Another man has grave family worries that dog him. Another, the voice-over man, is a writer who scribbles at night by searchlight. These and other story lines course through, and, if somewhat ritual, at least they serve thematic points, the sense of entrapment yet the sense of the making of a unit.

The director, Joel Schumacher, showed in *A Time to Kill* that he can deal in a spacious way with large-scale drama. Here, however, he digs in, almost claustrophobically close to the face-in-the-mud scramble of men whose lives will depend on losing the standards by which they used to live. To intensify this mode of change, Schumacher has chosen unknown actors, all of them better than competent but none of them recognizable from previous pictures, relative newcomers to us as to the army. This was a daring move on Schumacher's part, and it greatly helps his film.

Even more helpful is the style. The camera is hand-held much of the time, slicing into these lives with abrupt turns and switches, giving us the sense of accompaniment. We are told that the film was shot in 16 mm, and in a few of the sequences the enlargement to full-screen size is a bit fuzzy; but most of Matthew Libatique's camera work has documentary grit. Mark Stevens's ruthless editing underlines the frenzy.

The Vietnam War spawned some of the best combat films ever made, *Platoon* and *Hamburger Hill* among them. *Tigerland* is not literally a combat film, is not literally set in Vietnam, but, gripping from the first moment, it is something more than a faint souvenir of that war. It is a drama of men finding an enforced community while they are being readied for a war that has gone down in history as, in David Halberstam's term, a quagmire.

Schumacher says that his technique here was inspired by the Danish director Lars von Trier, prophet of the so-called Dogma style that discards such accoutrements as fancy lighting and sets. Schumacher's statement is the best thing I know about von Trier, whose own films, chaste though they may be in technique, are nonetheless artificial in the extreme. *Zentropa* was a long wallow in sensitivity-for-sale. *Breaking the Waves* was opera posing as reality. The new one, **Dancer in the Dark** (Fine Line), is a large glob of aggrandized trash.

Selma, a young woman with a ten-year-old son, has emigrated from Czechoslovakia to Washington state in 1964. Why that state and that year is never explained. Selma has very bad eyes, is going blind, and is saving money—in cash—from her factory job to pay for a preventive operation on her son's eyes. A married policeman is in love with her. When he tries to take her money, she kills him—he even, not quite rationally, implores her to do it because she can't love him. She is tried, convicted, and hanged.

This plot might just barely have been acceptable in nineteenth-century melodrama—a mother, keeping her virtue, sacrifices all for her son. Here it is cheap sausage meat forced into an arty casing. The film begins with a rehearsal of an amateur production of *The Sound of Music* with Selma in the cast, and within two minutes, the whiz-bang zigzagging of the camera says to us: "This story may look like drivel, but if it were drivel, would it be shot this way?" This mobile style may have inspired Schumacher, but, because von Trier's material is so banal, the master's film seems a weak imitation of his disciple.

The hand-held zigzagging is not all of von Trier's stylistics. From time to time during the story, people in a scene burst into song and dance—in the factory where Selma works, in the courtroom where she is tried, on the scaffold where she is to be executed. In such films as *The Ruling Class* and *Love's Labor's Lost*, the outbursts of song and dance had charm as a commentary on the theme, the disclosure of currents underneath. Here the song-and-dance is extraneous flummery, intended only to demonstrate further that the director is an artist.

These musical intrusions were presumably abetted, if not inspired, by the casting of Björk as Selma. She is an Icelandic pop singer with a feeble voice who writes her own feeble songs and sings them all through the picture. And *that's* not all. Björk is appallingly fey. Von Trier has a weakness for mad young things: Emily Watson was cloyingly elfin in *Breaking the Waves*—it took more films to establish that she really is talented—and his gossamer creature here is Björk. English theater people use the adjective "twee" to denote something that is consciously cute. Björk is the queen of twee.

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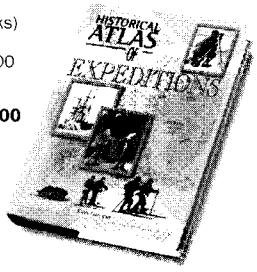

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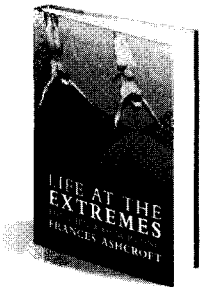

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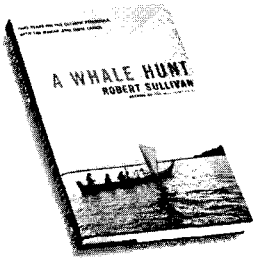

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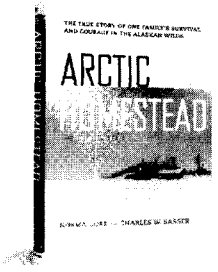

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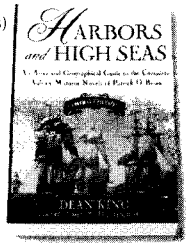

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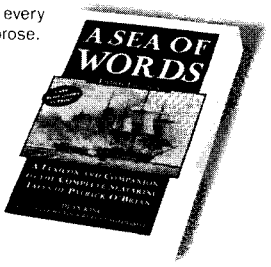

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To confirm his myopia in casting, von Trier has put Catherine Deneuve—that is not a misprint—in the role of Selma's sidekick in the Washington tinware factory. (And he has Deneuve sit in the front row at her pal's execution.) What's next on the von Trier agenda, Bette Midler as Lady Macbeth?

Ever since the velour artiness of *Zentropa*, it has been all too clear that von Trier is straining to be crowned as a genius. In the film world, that title is sometimes bestowed because of a director's sheer pretentiousness. It isn't quite true that, in film judgments, nothing succeeds like excess; but it sure doesn't hurt. ■

Robert Brustein on Theater

Moscow Nights

AUTUMN IN MOSCOW is normally a season of change, but this year it has been marked by more than glowering skies and chilling rains. The season has also hosted a major shift in the structure of Russian theater, sparked by the passing last May of Oleg Yefremov, artistic director of the Moscow Art Theater (MXAT). Another in a growing list of recent and irreplaceable losses, Yefremov had been leading this celebrated theater for the past thirty years. He was able to extend the reach of the company with some of the more innovative techniques of the twentieth century while still managing to preserve the heritage of its founding director, Constantin Stanislavsky.

Poised to bring the company into the twenty-first century is Yefremov's successor, the actor-director Oleg Tabakov. Tabakov is a well-regarded veteran of the company. A photograph of him playing Salieri in *Amadeus* hangs on the walls of the MXAT restaurant, next to portraits of Stanislavsky (playing Vershinin in Chekhov's *Three Sisters*), Michael Chekhov (playing Khlestakov in Gogol's *Inspector General*), and Yefremov (playing Don Quixote). Besides being a leading stage actor, Tabakov is a Russian movie star, which makes him an extremely popular choice for his new role. He has also been running his own company, the Oleg Tabakov Theater, for a number of years. And as if to suggest that nothing theatrical is alien (or exhausting) to him, he has meanwhile been functioning as the head of the Moscow Art Theater training program. Tabakov retains his position as artistic director of the Tabakov Theater (now under the control of MXAT). But he has relinquished his position as head of the school to Anatoly Smeliansky, Associate Director of the Moscow Art Theater and a celebrated Bulgakov scholar who has written books on Russian drama after the revolution and an exhaustive encyclopedia of MXAT since its inception.

It is too soon to say what changes will be made at MXAT by the new management, but it is fairly safe to predict that the work will be more accessible and contemporary. One of Tabakov's most celebrated productions at his own theater was Neil Simon's *Biloxi Blues*, a choice that would have been inconceivable at Yefremov's MXAT. The affable Tabakov has a common touch that is certain to manifest itself in the future work of the Moscow Art Theater—and while he will probably keep the old staples in the repertory, it looks like Russian audiences can begin to expect many more plays from abroad.

Visiting Moscow for a few days to see one of my own plays mounted at the Pushkin Theater, I had the opportunity to interview some of the principals (not Tabakov, who was in hospital) and to watch some rehearsals at MXAT. MXAT was dark at the moment, preparing to open its season on October 1, Yefremov's birthday, with the production that he had been directing when he died, Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*. The company would thereafter perform it three days a week until Tabakov prepared a new repertory. Russian productions are rehearsed for months before they are exposed to the public, often in full costume against a completed set. This *Cyrano* was being completed by Yefremov's assistant director, Nikolai Skorik.

Rostand's play is an old warhorse that is too arthritic to learn new paces; and, as I watched the wooing scene in rehearsal, I had the impression that the success of this version was going to have to depend on the acting rather than on any new directorial ideas. The set of Vyacheslav Yefimov (who is also the managing director of the theater) was a bit of a novelty: a tubular doughnut-shaped sculpture, topped by a halo of lights, that served both as Roxanne's balcony and Cyrano's hiding place. It was a handsome design, but it seemed destined to cramp the actors and to limit the space for the big battle scenes. The rehearsal gave me the feeling that I had been peering into the theater's past.

It was at the Oleg Tabakov Theater that I got my most vivid impression of what might be happening in the future at MXAT. The Tabakov, which occupies the basement of an apartment house, was showing a production of Tennessee Williams's *Vieux Carré* on its 110-seat experimental stage. (As further evidence of the artistic director's affection for the United States, the Williams play is in repertory with a stage adaptation of the movie *Sex, Lies, and Videotape*.) Like Peter Brook, Tabakov does not believe in making theatergoers too comfortable, so we spectators were forced to watch the show on cramped hard benches, our elbows and our buns competing with those of our neighbors for space. Still, the auditorium was packed, like most Russian theaters, with an engaged, lively, and attentive group of people who obviously much preferred theatergoing to movies, television, or the Internet.

Like most of Williams's later plays, *Vieux Carré* is lushly overwritten in the playwright's most succulent plantain style. But unlike such dotage pieces as *Small Craft Warnings* and *The Two-Character Play*, it has considerable energy and (this is unusual for Williams) sexual honesty. The play is largely autobiographical, taking place in the Garden District of New Orleans, where the playwright took refuge after his beloved grandmother died and he was fleeing his family in St. Louis. With a central character portentously called "The Writer," the play concerns the author's evolution as an artist concurrent with a growing awareness of his homosexual disposition and his gradual "coming out." Instead of staying discreetly offstage (like Blanche's sensitive husband in *A Streetcar Named Desire*), or masquerading as strutting macho studs (like Chance Wayne in *Sweet Bird of Youth* and Val Xavier in *Orpheus Descending*), openly gay men are very critical to the action in *Vieux Carré*. One character, called Nightingale, is a consumptive transvestite; another, called Tye, aside from being a gigolo, occasionally acts as rough trade; and still another, a musician named Sky, persuades The Writer to become his lover at the end of the play.

Aside from being autobiographical, the play is a virtual compendium of previous Williams works. There are echoes of *Camino Real* in *Vieux Carré*'s loose epi-

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sodic form. The class contrasts and speech contrasts between the animalistic Tye and Jane, the elegant woman whom he services, recall the cultural chasm between Stanley and Blanche in *Streetcar*. And an account of a gogo girl who is eaten alive by wolfish dogs reminds one of the cannibalistic world of *Suddenly Last Summer*. One is accustomed to see Williams repeating himself in the last plays that he wrote. The difference here is that *Vieux Carré* finds its authenticity as a memory play, exploring personal experiences that the playwright has not touched since *The Glass Menagerie*. By having The Writer, recovering from a cataract operation in New Orleans, ruminate on how he developed a carapace around his feelings, Williams manages not only to tap into previously unexplored areas of his creative storehouse but to do some serious probing into his own character, too.

Vieux Carré takes place in the cheap rooming house of Mrs. Wire, a ferocious and avaricious old bag who rules her domain like a Tartar. Much to her chagrin, everyone in her establishment is not only failing to pay the rent on time but also having some kind of illicit relationship. Even worse for the reputation of the place, almost everyone seems to be sick or dying. It is a house of catastrophe, and before the play is over, characters will be carried out feet first, scalded with boiling water, felled by blood disease, or stained by disappointment and disillusionment. Yet most of the characters in the play are also softened by some redemptive quality, such as Mrs. Wire's maternal love for The Writer. (She hallucinates that he is really her son.) Williams has not lost his belief in life as a precarious and precipitous series of traps that people avoid only by turning into predators themselves. He is simply leavening his patented sense of feral horror with the yeast of compassion.

The production of the play at the Tabakov, under the direction of Andrey Zhitinkin, is a very bizarre affair, though it features some strong acting. Zhitinkin's idea of American bohemianism, in this severely truncated version of the play, is to deck everyone out in long white scarves. And despite the fact that the atmosphere of the work is drenched in New Orleans blues, the background music is mostly played on a Jew's harp. The self-pity of these American characters, almost all of them failed artists, seems over-emphasized in the hands of the Russian actors. The actors playing on the narrow and deep stage are as cramped as the spectators watching them, being forced to virtually climb over each other while passing through their adjacent "rooms." Accomplished though they are, a few of the actors (notably the aging Mrs. Wire, played by a robust blonde in her forties) are too young for their roles. Some of the others are painfully miscast, notably the black maid Nursie, played by a white Russian actress in blackface and bandanna as if she had just walked off a pancake box. (There is only one professional black actor in Moscow, and he is a man with a white Russian mother.)

But the real question of the production is why, when sex is the leitmotif of the play, virtually all the carnal action was excised. Aside from a little white makeup under his eyes, the gay poet Nightingale gave no evidence of his transvestite inclinations; most of the more explicit homoerotic scenes had been cut out; and even the heterosexual heavy breathing between Jane and Tye was subdued by the censor's muffler. Up until the late 1980s, homosexuality was considered a crime in Russia, but even now, when criminal restrictions have been lifted, it is not a subject that Muscovites are willing to see on the stage. (In the Russian production of my own play, the director cut a moment in which a son takes his father on his lap because it was thought to be homoerotically suggestive.)

Clearly, the Puritanism traditionally associated with the Soviet regime is still a factor in Russian culture. (Puritanism exists in our culture as well, but more among theater's enemies than among its friends.) Still, I am glad to have seen the play and to have once again had the opportunity to mingle with a passionate and devoted audience. There are almost 200 well-attended theaters in Moscow, over sixty of them state-supported professional companies, so one never gets the feeling in this city that classical culture is vestigial or superfluous. Quite the contrary: it remains a central fact of everyday life.

Now that the cultural Iron Curtain has melted, one hopes that classical culture could once again become a central fact of ours. American theater practice was forever changed after MXAT visited New York in the early 1920s. The Group Theater, most famously, was founded in an effort to replicate Russian stage techniques through the agency of American actors. Today the energy seems to be flowing the other way. Though we still remain in relative ignorance about contemporary Russian drama, there is a growing Russian absorption with American culture—indicated by the proliferation of McDonald's and Pizza Hut restaurants, to be sure, but also by the production of serious American plays. Tabakov will undoubtedly ring that new focus to the Moscow Art Theater. And maybe the example of the Russian stage will once again help to reinvigorate and inspire our own flagging theater culture. ■

The Unconsoled

By JAMES WOOD

When We Were Orphans by Kazuo Ishiguro

(Knopf, 337 pp., $25)

THERE ARE NOVELISTS whose books are always the same, as similar as postage stamps. Anita Brookner is one such, and Kazuo Ishiguro might have been one had he not published a strange novel six years ago called *The Unconsoled*. He had proved himself, in three previous books, the reliable creator of a gently unreliable first-person narrator, the best-known of whom is Stevens, the English butler in *The Remains of the Day*. In these books, Ishiguro controlled a kind of emotional seepage. The narrator—calm, flat, hiding behind the foil of a pedantic English style—unwittingly reveals, here and there, his failures, and reveals that all is not calm or flat. Emotion is pressurized: the more it is inhibited, the more it longs to be released; and it is the writer's task to know when to control its escape.

The danger of using an unreliable narrator is that the narrator is always reliably unreliable, and thus a little unreal, a fake, since his unreliability is manipulated by the writer. Indeed, without the writer's reliability we would not be able to read the narrator's unreliability. Once Ishiguro had begun replicating this narrator in a series of novels, his reliability was in danger of overwhelming his narrator's unreliability. Indeed, he admitted to an English newspaper that he had become almost too expert at this kind of narration, that he yearned for something more ragged. The result was *The Unconsoled*, essentially a five-hundred-page dream-narrative.

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It was bold of Ishiguro to abjure facility and to exchange it for difficulty. Kafka spoke of the effect of his work as "seasickness on dry land"; but Ishiguro's novel produced, in many readers, seasickness at sea. In fact, he had not entirely renounced the unreliable narrator. As in the earlier books, a man tells a story that he appears to control, but which he does not in fact control, in an elaborately pressed and buttoned English: "I stepped out into the corridor and made my way to the elevator feeling not a little annoyed"; "After a while I happened to glance down at the lake and was surprised to find I was now looking at it from a considerably different angle." He speaks to the reader as if he were the caption on one of those mock-solemn Glen Baxter cartoons, in which, say, underneath a spidery 1930s drawing of a man holding his detached head in his hands, a sentence reads: "Professor Pretheridge was most perturbed to find that he was losing his mind."

Ryder, the narrator of *The Unconsoled*, is a pianist visiting an unnamed central European town to play a recital. But nothing happens as expected. Ryder is aware that he has a busy schedule, but he is never shown it. The town's inhabitants constantly solicit him for tasks other than piano-playing: would he help a family with its domestic problems? Others remind him that the town is expecting great things of him, but nobody can specify what they are. The place and the people seem oddly familiar to Ryder. One of the women there may well be his wife; she scolds him for having been away so much. His parents are due in town, though he cannot remember when. The ticket-collector on the tram is a woman whom he once knew at school in England. Buildings and bedrooms remind him of his childhood. Gradually it becomes clear that Ryder will fail to save the town from whatever mysterious ailment sickens it, and that he will be unaware of this failure.

For a while at least, the novel has the compulsion that any ribbon of novelties, even a dream, possesses: as the narrator is led from one strange room to another, as one peculiar event follows another, so the peculiarity becomes its own narrative. We are led by the scent of decipherment itself. But inevitably the novel's smoky estrangements begin to cloud its few pleasures. Decipherment seems to be requested: what to make, say, of Mr. Brodsky, the old conductor, who uses an ironing-board instead of a baton to conduct? But being a composed dream-narrative (that is, one written by Ishiguro) rather than an accidental dream-text (the kind we dream while we sleep), its decipherment could only be meaningless, since a dream's significance is that it is not intended, not artistic, not written. (This is why it is almost impossible to write a novel-as-dream.)

Unkindly, one might say that *The Unconsoled* has the virtue of being unlike anything else, since it invented its own category of badness. Pleasingly, Ishiguro's new novel, *When We Were Orphans*, is also unlike anything else, but it invents its own category of goodness. It does, in fact, resemble *The Unconsoled* in a few respects. Its narrator, Christopher Banks, is wildly unreliable, and the tale that he tells has elements of fantasy and dream. It is 1931, and Christopher Banks is a successful London detective, a society figure trailing the successes of his celebrated cases, or so he tells us. That he might be something of a fantasist, or that he has something to hide, is suggested within a few pages, when he bumps into Osbourne, with whom he was at boarding school (St. Dunstan's). Osbourne recalls that Christopher was an "odd bird," and Christopher vehemently denies it to us, insisting that he did not stand out at school, that he learned how to fit in: "my own memory is that I blended perfectly into English school life. During even my earliest weeks at St Dunstan's, I do not believe I did anything to cause myself embarrassment." Later in the novel a similar scene will occur, when Christopher meets another old school friend, who remembers him as a "miserable loner." No, says Christopher, "you must have me mixed up with someone else, old fellow. I was always one for mucking in."

Kazuo Ishiguro by Jack Coughlin for The New Republic

Clearly, it is important for Christopher to believe that he has conformed to English society, and has been seen to conform. We soon learn why. He was an expatriate, brought up in Shanghai, in the International Settlement, where his father worked for an English trading company. In a sequence of beautiful reminiscences, dappled with the flickering, golden light of childhood memory, Christopher tells us about his happy early years in Shanghai, around the turn of the last century, and his best friend there, a Japanese boy named Akira. The large house in which he grew up was owned by his father's firm, which meant that newly-arrived English employees would spend a few weeks with the Banks family. For Christopher, who knew little about England, these young men carried its atmosphere with them, "the air of the English lanes and meadows I knew from *The Wind in the Willows*, or else the foggy streets of the Conan Doyle mysteries."

He remembers playing games with Akira, who called him "old chip," because that is how he was taught to pronounce "old chap" by his English teacher. Akira is keen not to disappoint his parents: he fears that if he does, he will be sent to a boarding school in Japan. One day, the little boy tells Christopher (somewhat improbably, but the whole novel hovers between a soft incredibility and a soft plausibility) that it is children who keep the family, indeed the whole world, together: "Then he sat up and pointed to one of the slatted sun-blinds at that moment hanging partially down over a window. We children, he said, were like the twine that kept the slats together. A Japanese monk had once told him this. We often failed to realise it, but it was we children who bound not only a family, but the

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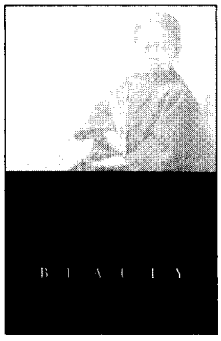

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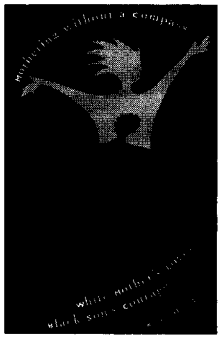

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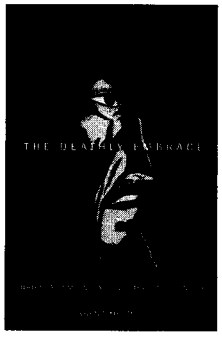

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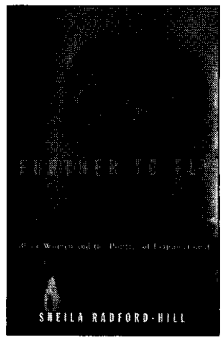

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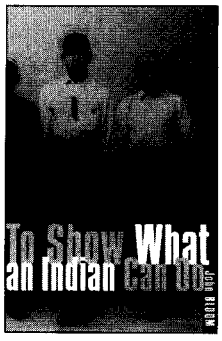

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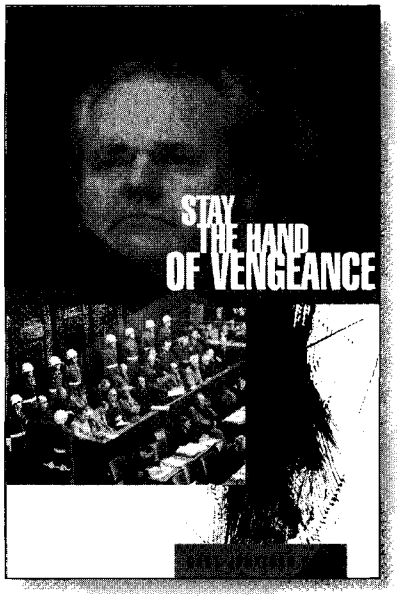

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whole world together. If we did not do our part, the slats would fall and scatter over the floor."

That world falls and scatters over the floor one morning when Christopher's father goes to work and fails to return. It seems that he has been kidnapped; his company does business in the shady importation of Indian opium, and his wife has been struggling to get him to campaign against this trade. A few months later, Christopher's mother disappears too, and the nine-year-old boy is taken by a man called Colonel Chamberlain to England, where there is a willing aunt. Thus ends Christopher's childhood idyll; and he will spend the rest of the novel trying to recover it.

He grows up in England, and, it seems, will never see his parents again. Christopher, who is English, was foreign in Shanghai, and he is now foreign in England, though apparently he cannot admit to the latter strangeness. He speaks to us—and thus the novel is written—in a style of English that seems, more even than in Ishiguro's previous work, almost a spoof, something between a pastiche of Conan Doyle and a parody of the kind of gossipy, metropolitan, highly "English" prose written by Anthony Powell. Here is Ishiguro:

> This *faux pas* seemed to cause Osbourne much more anguish than it had me. Indeed, it is not impossible that it had remained on his conscience for all those years, so that in asking me to accompany him to the Charingworth Club that evening, he was in some way trying to make amends. In any case, as I say, I had not been at all upset that foggy morning by his admittedly careless remark.

And here is Powell, in *The Soldier's Art*, the eighth novel of the twelve-volume *Dance to the Music of Time*:

> To have trusted Diplock, to have stood by him when accused of peculation, was, so far as I knew from my own experience of Colonel Hogbourne-Johnson, the only occasion when he had ever shown a generous impulse. Of course that was speaking from scarcely any knowledge of him at all. In private life he may have displayed qualities concealed during this brief observation of his professional behaviour.

Most of *When We Were Orphans* is set in the 1930s, and Christopher seems to be using the artificiality of upper-class language to upholster his own artificiality. Christopher's London milieu is almost entirely stereotypical, almost generic, like the names of the places and people in his life: his boarding school, he tells us, was

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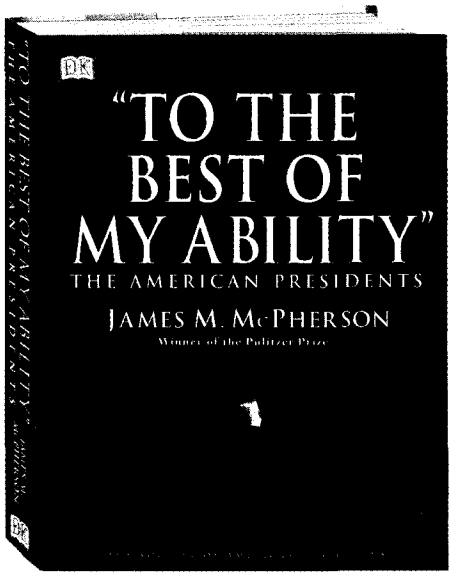
St. Dunstan's, he goes to the Charingworth Club, he knows Colonel Chamberlain and Canon Moorly, he meets old school chums called Osbourne and Robert Thornton-Browne, he visits the Royal Geographical Society "to hear H. L. Mortimer deliver his lecture."

Christopher's world seems to have been borrowed from an English novel, and this is surely Ishiguro's intended effect. Christopher is producing a masquerade of a style that is already something of a masquerade; he is not entirely real–not to himself, not to those who encounter him, and not to Ishiguro's readers. It is not that Ishiguro is postmodernistically concerned to suggest that this kind of "Englishness" does not exist, though the stability of the entity is certainly a casualty of his novel. It is more, I think, that he wants us to see Christopher as a man deformed by the effort of conformity—deformed into genre, into unreality, and, if necessary, into falsehood.

Christopher has become a successful detective (if he is to be believed), but he behaves like a criminal in relation to his identity, a man who withholds crucial information, who cannot quite get his story straight, an athlete of the alibi. He never takes London buses, only cabs, because "I'm convinced if I get on one, it'll take me somewhere I don't want to go, and I'll spend the rest of the day trying to find my way back." When a society lady asks him about his childhood in Shanghai, he informs us, as if in triumph: "I did not reveal anything of any real significance."

Christopher cannot leave his childhood. Again like the criminal, he must return to the scene of his own crime. Burgeoningly obsessed by the sense that his parents are still alive, despite the twenty-five or so years that they must have passed in captivity, he decides, in 1937, to return to Shanghai and to search for them. It is here that the novel, already a little opaque, is touched by the wing of the surreal. Christopher's certainty that his parents are still to be found, and found in one particular house, is strange enough. Yet he never doubts that he is right. The expatriate community in Shanghai does not doubt it either; or at least this is what Christopher, our only conduit, tells us. As soon as he arrives, an official from the British embassy approaches him, eager to discuss the arrangements for the ceremony in which Christopher will be reunited with his parents.

Stranger than this, as in *The Unconsoled*, the various residents of the International Settlement seem to want something from Christopher Banks. They talk as if his arrival will solve not only the case of the missing parents, but also the larger crisis of the Japanese invasion of Shang-



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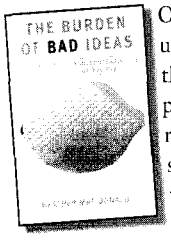

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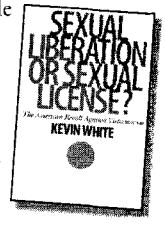

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hai. (The Japanese are already shelling the city.) Several people tell Christopher that now that he has arrived, they can breathe more easily; the worst is over now that a great detective like Mr. Banks has arrived. And they help him to find the kidnapper's house, where he believes his parents are being held. The novel contains a fine long passage, in which Christopher stumbles across the Sino-Japanese war-lines and through the wrecked city, toward the house he has fixated upon. Of course, it does not house his parents.

It is difficult to know how to interpret these scenes. The most natural reading is to see Christopher's return to Shanghai as a fantasist's attempt to make whole his world, just as Akira once said that the twine holds together not just the slats but "the whole world." His childhood is his whole world, so it is not surprising that he should embroider, or even imagine, episodes in which strangers approach him and thank him for rescuing *their* whole worlds. Earlier in the novel, Christopher told us that after the kidnapping of his father, Akira and he would play games in which Akira was the hostaged father and Christopher the rescuer. In this sense, the adult Christopher is still playing childhood games; he has been unable to escape his childhood. It is he who has really been kidnapped, kidnapped by his memories, and it is he, not his parents, who have remained the same. (His first name perhaps recalls Milne's perpetual boy, Christopher Robin.)

The novel's highest achievement is the gentle way it offers Christopher's tale as a surreal allegory of the ways in which we are the prisoners of our childhoods, the criminals of our pasts, always guilty with memory. Though this is now an obvious post-Freudian insight, the book has an almost pre-Freudian tilt, in the way that *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* does, in which Rilke remarks beautifully that "our memories often have the vagueness of premonitions, and the fact that they are past almost makes them rise up as future." In Rilke's and Ishiguro's sense, we are always traveling towards our childhoods as well as away from them, and our past is a future already determined and our future a fulfilled past.

Ishiguro's novel drifts between a sense that childhood is lost, a vanished kingdom, and a sense that our childhood is our only kingdom and we are condemned to be always finding it around or in us. Late in the book, Christopher is told by a Japanese officer that one of the Japanese poets wrote that "our childhood becomes like a foreign land once we have grown." To this Christopher replies: "Well, Colonel, it's hardly a foreign land to me. In many ways, it's where I've continued to live all my life. It's only now I've started to make my journey from it."

The novel is, if anything, too profligate with clues in this area, and it begins to drop somewhat over-ripe fruit into the reader's lap. It is excessive, for instance, for Christopher to encounter his old friend Akira, now a Japanese soldier who has been wounded by Chinese. The wounded Akira, too obligingly, falls asleep and dreams of his childhood. Christopher tells him, "those were splendid days.... We didn't know it then, of course, just how splendid they were. Children never do, I suppose."

It would claim too much to say that this novel is entirely successful. With its dream-like perorations and implausible scenes, it has really expelled itself from such aspiration. It certainly does not loiter in the precincts of verisimilitude. But it is one of the strange successes of Ishiguro's book that it dismantles the expectations of realism so calmly, and without causing the usual irritations, replacing them with an allegorical tableau that has a frozen allure. At times the novel has the logic and movement of a Dostoyevsky novel, mysteriously drained of the passion that provides the logic in Dostoyevsky's world.

As in Dostoyevsky, Christopher moves apparently pointlessly from encounter to encounter. As everyone wants something which they cannot quite articulate from Stavrogin in *The Possessed*, so everyone wants something inarticulable from Christopher (as they did from Ryder in *The Unconsoled*). Like Stavrogin or Prince Myshkin, Christopher, who is something of a holy fool, moves from room to room, house to house, and each scene is a kind of tabula rasa, a new beginning. As in Dostoyevsky, narration seems here to have a short memory (though its latent memory of childhood is all-determining).

This can be estranging, and occasionally irritating, for *When We Were Orphans* moves like Dostoyevsky but lacks Dostoyevsky's intellectual or psychological urgency. What relieves Dostoyevsky's novels from the chaos of subjectivity is that his characters are driven by ideas and by obsessions that, while sometimes madly obscure, belong to an objective intellectual universe. (They are often private perversions of this universe.) The characters in Ishiguro's book, by contrast, are murkily driven by obsessions that remain obscurely private. Indeed, they are driven as if by dream. The effect, when passed through Ishiguro's fanatically calm prose, can be that the reader inhabits not so much a chaos of subjectivity as a ballet of subjectivity, without a score.

Yet Christopher's unreliable memory is a fine tank in which to float strange, dream-like scenes. There are many moments in which Ishiguro creates a provok-

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ing surrealism. For instance, Christopher tells us of going to a cocktail party in London. He has only a few details, but they are oddly compelling and almost grotesque:

> I am sure this same agitated frame of mind accounts for the fact that when I now think back to that evening, so many aspects seem somewhat exaggerated or unnatural. For instance, when I now try to picture the room, it is uncommonly dark.... The carpet is very thick, so that to move around the room, one is obliged to drag one's feet, and all around, greying men in black jackets are doing just this, some even pressing forward with their shoulders as if walking into a gale. The waiters, too, with their silver trays, lean into conversations at peculiar angles.

This is like something painted by Grosz. If it is more successfully involving than any scene in *The Unconsoled*, it is surely because of the balance struck between the surreal and the concrete. The guests and the waiters dragging their feet and walking into a gale are vivid and comic, and the scene merely pulls the tail of the real so that it jolts it a little. In general, the novel proceeds like this, offering a piebald picture of the real and the unreal, the material and the dreamlike. The book's very title is shadowy. Who are "we"? Akira was not an orphan. There is only Christopher. Nor does the novel, in defiance of its title, really describe any moment when Christopher *was* an orphan: we see him as a happy child, and then as a successful adult. The time when he was an "orphan" (at St. Dunstan's) is precisely the book's, and presumably Christopher's, painful lacuna. Gershom Scholem once suggested that the power of Kafka had to do with the fact that his world is entirely concrete and yet nothing in it can ever be fulfilled. Mutedly, Ishiguro's novel moves through a similar paradox. Certainly, it deserves the title of *The Unconsoled* far more than its predecessor. ■

The Law of the Beholder

By RICHARD A. POSNER

Minding the Law
by Anthony G. Amsterdam and Jerome Bruner

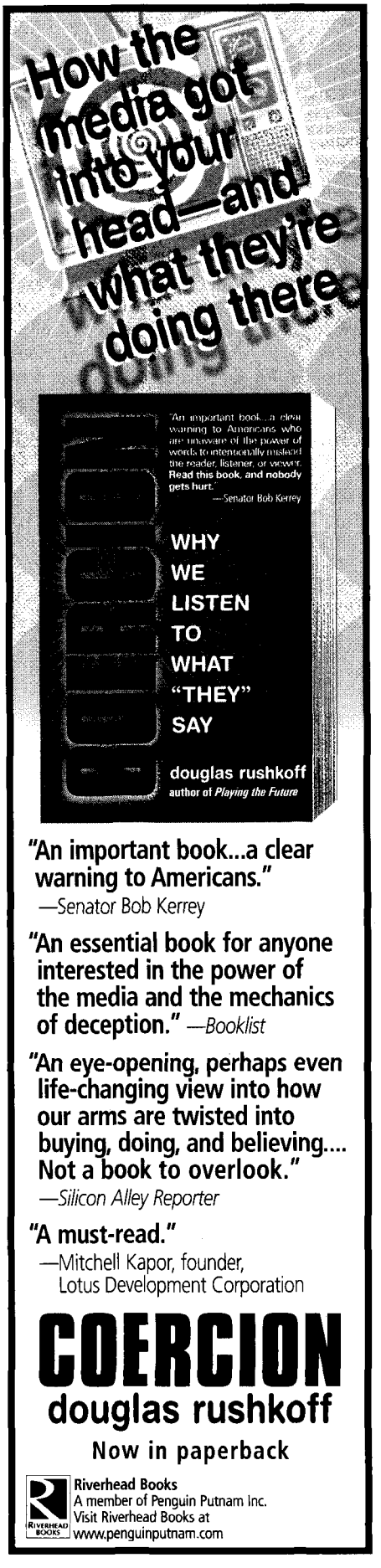
(Harvard University Press, 425 pp., $35)

ANTHONY AMSTERDAM IS a distinguished law professor who has devoted most of his career to litigating on behalf of civil-rights plaintiffs and death-penalty defendants. Jerome Bruner is a distinguished psychology professor. They have now collaborated on an engaging, even riveting book about the cognitive phenomena that shape (or so Amsterdam and Bruner argue) judicial decision-making even as they shape all mental activities. Specifically, there are four such phenomena: categorization; narration; rhetoric (roughly, putting factual situations into conceptual pigeonholes, telling them as stories, and making them persuasive stories through the use of rhetorical devices); and culture (groupthink, overriding individual rationality).

Amsterdam and Bruner illustrate these four decision-influencing factors by several Supreme Court opinions that reached illiberal results that distress the authors. They are self-described left-liberals, and of a particularly uncompromising hue—who else today would say that most crimes that are prosecuted are not "predatory"? The only opinion that Amsterdam and Bruner seem to like, and which they reward with sustained (though actually rather perfunctory) attention, is *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, of which they are uncritically approving.

Amsterdam and Bruner's book draws competently on a wide range of ideas from psychology, philosophy, and literature; it discusses a fascinating set of cases; and it is lively and interesting. I noticed only a few mistakes of detail, such as repeating the myth that the language of the Eskimos contains twenty words for snow instead of our one (a myth that George Lakoff has termed "possibly the most boring thing a lin-

RICHARD A. POSNER is a Judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School.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guistics professor has to suffer at the hands of eager undergraduates"), and denying that statistical analysis can support causal hypotheses, and contrasting narratives with cause-and-effect accounts when in fact narratives embed such accounts. But these are minor points. The book is a valuable addition to the branch of "law and literature" scholarship that examines the rhetoric of judicial opinions, and to the nascent study of the psychology of judicial decision-making. Yet it has three very serious weaknesses of which its authors, surprisingly, seem to be unaware (with one incomplete exception, as we shall see). Those weaknesses are irrationalism, self-reference, and cause-and-effect reversal.

A CONVENTIONAL LEGAL thinker asked to evaluate a Supreme Court decision would ask such questions as: did the Court get the facts right? Is the decision consistent with precedent, or does it give persuasive reasons for its departure from precedent? Is the outcome, to the extent that it is not constrained by precedent, sensible in light of considerations of policy and morality, including political morality, or prudence? These are also the questions that the conventional legal thinker would assume were in the minds of the Justices in deciding the case. On this view, the legal process is a rational process to be evaluated by rational criteria, although the realist will acknowledge that in very close cases inarticulable feelings and intuitions may play a decisive role in the judicial outcome. Analyzing the rational properties of the decision helps to place those "realistic" factors in focus, and to demarcate the open area in which the judge is unconstrained by the usual materials of decision.

The controlling assumption of this conventional approach, which ties it to conventional ideas about truth, is that there is correspondence between what the judges do and a reality external to them; between the judge's description of the facts and the facts; between the judge's analysis of the precedents and the precedents; between his recital of policy or moral concerns and the social realities and moral code of the society. This is the simple epistemology that postmodernism rejects. And Amsterdam and Bruner, without embracing that label, reject it too.

They do not believe that judges' decisions are driven by an external reality that is brought to bear on the decision-making process by accurate perception and inference and analysis. They think that judicial decisions and other human actions are determined by unconscious mental processes that trigger and guide the evaluation of our perceptions. In their view, we do not reason to conclusions, we jump to them—or rather, we are jumped to them by the promptings of our mental furnitures. Which is to say, by our categories (many in the nature of stereotypes); and by our pat narratives—"much of human reality and its 'facts' are not merely recounted by narrative but *constituted* by it" (the emphasis is in the original, as in all my subsequent quotations as well, unless otherwise indicated); and by our inveterate propensity to substitute rhetoric for sound reasoning (rhetoric that fools the user and not just his audience, that "has the effect of allowing the [Supreme] Court to conceal from itself the reality of the choice that it is making"); and by the culture that surrounds and penetrates us, of which we have no more critical awareness than of the air we breathe.

All this is as true of the judicial process, in Amsterdam and Bruner's account, as it is of ordinary, everyday, non-reflective, non-expressive human activities. This is a vision of a radical subjectivism. The judge's motto could well be Hamlet's reply to Guildenstern when the latter expressed disagreement with Hamlet's statement that "Denmark's a prison": "Why then 'tis none to you, for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." Thus the authors say that "race is not a fact found in the world but a *socially constructed* idea." And so it follows that racism is a bad dream from which we may awake at any time. (Amsterdam and Bruner are silent on whether ethnic dif-

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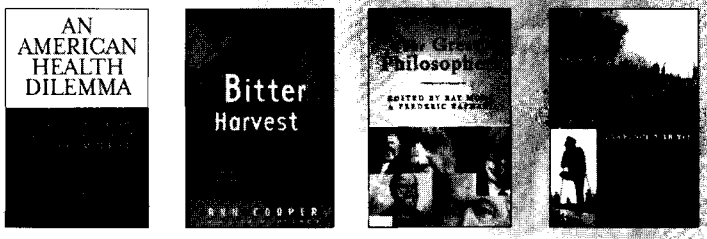

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ferences, which frequently are correlated with race, are also merely illusions in the mind of the beholder.)

Why did Justice Scalia write an opinion denying the natural father of a child born to a woman married to another man any rights in the child? Because of "the power of the Guinevere legend in shaping Justice Scalia's portrayal of adultery ... Scalia was inexorably called to punish [the adulterer's] villainy, prosecute the larger war against encroaching Evil, and restore security to territory threatened by seductive, wanton, and rebellious powers." It is all a matter of where you're coming from. Amsterdam and Bruner are confessed perspectivists. "For we too need to take stances," they remark. "Stance, after all, is perspective in action—*the condition for knowing.*" (Those italics are mine.) Not until their penultimate chapter do they acknowledge that their own perspective "will bear the unmistakable imprint of our own proclivities." Then they invite the reader "to be critical about *our* predispositions." It did not occur to them to be critical of themselves.

If their theory of the causality of judicial decisions is right, it disarms the critic, who can retort only that if this is what the judicial process is like, then we should make sure that nothing of importance is given to it to decide. To say that a decision is wrong becomes as meaningless as to say that one had a dream that was wrong. This is a serious problem for Amsterdam and Bruner's analysis. They may have overlooked it because of their decision to discuss only judicial opinions that they do not admire. The only significant exception is the opinion in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which they exempt from the critical examination to which they subject the other opinions that they discuss.

Readers of a book about cognitive phenomena that are believed to be universal do not expect the phenomena to come with a political stamp on them. They expect the authors to choose politically neutral illustrations, so that the focus will remain unwaveringly on the phenomena and the assumption of universality will be preserved. By their politically biased choice of opinions to criticize, which places them always on the side of the angels, Amsterdam and Bruner are able to overlook the quietistic, anti-reformist implications of their approach, as of cultural politics and postmodernist criticism generally. If everybody has his own truth, then the decisions Amsterdam and Bruner like are true only for them and those who think like them; and they have no claim on anyone else.

Thus the belief, central to Amsterdam and Bruner's approach, that the cognitive distortions they describe are universal implies that if the judicial decisions that

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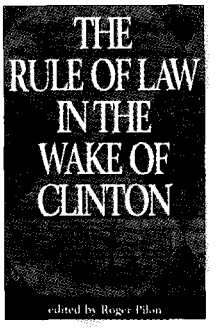

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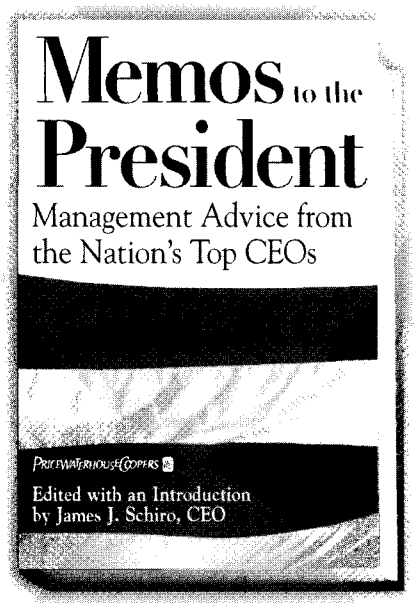
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they cherish, such as *Brown* v. *Board of Education* and *Roe* v. *Wade*, were put under similar examination, they would be seen to be equally the product of the irrationalities that the authors adduce with reference to judicial decisions that they abhor. For their subject is the "commonplace hidden pitfalls and snares that infest *every* path that any lawyer or judge *could* follow." They note with approval that the opinion in *Brown* "takes pains to downplay any villainy on the part of the segregating States." Yes, and that was a disingenuous though politically shrewd move, hiding for the sake of Southern sensibilities the fact that public school segregation was part of a deliberate system, fairly to be termed villainous, for the subordination of blacks to whites. The authors' method can be used as readily to undermine the decisions that they like as the decisions that they dislike.

Amsterdam and Bruner's approach is unwittingly self-referential in theory and in practice. No reason is given to suppose that academic thought is more rational than judicial thought. After deriding statistics as incapable of illuminating causality, they use statistics to demonstrate a statist slant in Supreme Court opinions involving race—and in doing so they violate fundamental rules of statistical inference, by basing their conclusions on a tiny, non-random sample, a sample of three cases chosen by themselves to demonstrate their own conclusion. Their argumentative procedures are those that they ascribe, disapprovingly, to the judges. They give no reasons for preferring one case outcome over another. Indeed, they pretend to be criticizing only texts, not outcomes. "We have not sought to reargue the cases on the merits or to advocate different outcomes." That would be too forthright. It would expose them, and it would invite rebuttal, as when the mask slips and they say that "the disagreement between Justice Scalia's opinion and Justice Brennan's dissent concerns not how to read our traditions but simply whether to honor them [Brennan] or to abandon all tradition [Scalia]."

Instead of arguing for their preferences and aversions, Amsterdam and Bruner vivify them through categorization, narrative, rhetoric, and left-liberal groupthink. They merely assume that causation in judicial decision-making runs from categorization, narrative, rhetoric, and culture to the outcome of cases, rather than vice versa. They do not consider the possibility that judges reason to the outcome and then, when it comes time to write the opinion explaining and justifying their conclusion, resort to literary devices and cultural cues, either in a conscious effort to make the opinion more persuasive or in unconscious conformity to the customs and the usages that define advocacy prose, which is what a judicial opinion is.

That the judicial decision precedes the judicial opinion is a more plausible hypothesis than Amsterdam and Bruner's hypothesis, especially when we reflect that judges are recruited from the ranks of lawyers. The lawyer, after all, is told by the client what outcome to strive for, and bends his forensic energies to the given end rather than being bent to it by the advocacy process itself, as the authors suppose happens to the judge. I have never heard of lawyers getting tricked by their narratives, their rhetorics, their categories, or their cultures into arguing *against* their side of the case.

Over and over again the book resorts to the non-rational methods of argument for which Amsterdam and Bruner skewer the Supreme Court Justices. The book states that "it seems less effortful to see unemployed persons as suffering their misfortune because of not 'trying' hard enough than because of structural shortcomings, say, in a capitalist system or of socialist planning." No support is offered for this conjecture. By placing "trying" in quotation marks, the authors signal their rejection, without any supporting argument or evidence, of the possibility that some unemployed persons indeed do *not* seek work—and that this behavior might be the consequence not of capitalism or of failures of socialist planning, but of a welfare system whose recent curtailment ("killing it off") the authors deplore.

Amsterdam and Bruner say that "pollution imagery" was "a central feature" of both "talk about the Jewish problem in Nazi Germany" and current "Anglo-American talk about the crime problem." This extraordinary statement conflates two exceedingly different senses of "pollution" in order to make Americans' concern about crime seem as odious as the Nazis' treatment of the Jews. The Nazis used the metaphor of pollution in the sense of corruption of blood: the Jews were bacilli infecting and threatening to destroy Germany. When Americans speak of crime as "polluting"—which, incidentally, is not a central feature of our current discourse about crime—we are thinking of the analogy between the industrial pollution that degrades the quality of life and the rampant criminality that does likewise.

Amsterdam and Bruner describe federal legislation supported by the Clinton administration to reduce the procedural rights of criminal defendants, including capital defendants, as Congress "killing the inmates"—a popular bit of rhetoric than one will find in the judicial decisions that the authors criticize. They speak of the Supreme Court's "own campaign to

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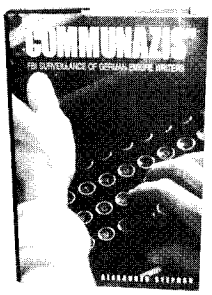

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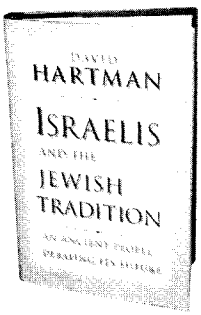

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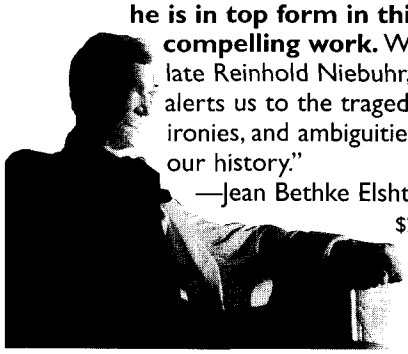

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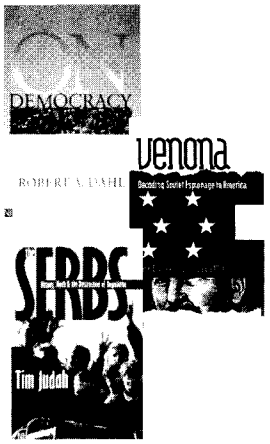

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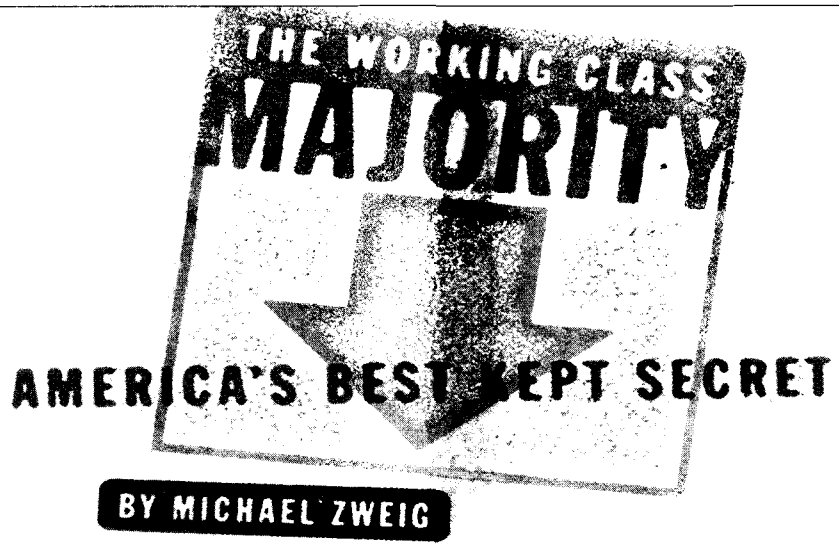

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escalate the flagging pace of executions," as if the Justices wanted to increase the number of executions rather than to reduce the length and the complexity of capital litigation.

They wax wroth also at decisions curtailing busing and other costly and controversial regulatory decrees entered by federal courts to eliminate the vestiges of public school segregation. Quoting from one of these decisions the statement that "the [district] court's end purpose must be to remedy the violation *and in addition to restore state and local authorities to the control of a school system that is operating in compliance with the Constitution*," Amsterdam and Bruner ridicule the idea that terminating judicial supervision of the schools could be "called the *purpose* of desegregation litigation." That is not what the Court meant. The purpose of the litigation was to achieve desegration. But the purpose of a district court in administering a desegregation decree many years after it has been entered surely has to include a concern about bringing the litigation to an end. By twisting the Court's meaning, and by failing to mention any of the rational considerations that might lead a court to want to terminate interminable regulatory litigation, Amsterdam and Bruner make the Court's decisions seem completely indefensible—but it is all done by innuendo, hyperbole, and scorn, as when they say that the decisions "bury *Brown* in rubble," or that the decisions define compliance with the Constitution to mean "a ghetto district of predominantly African-American schools surrounded by a ring of largely white suburban school districts." They insinuate that conservative federal judicial appointees who testify at their Senate confirmation hearings that they believe *Brown* was correctly decided are liars.

The decision that most exercises Amsterdam and Bruner is *McCleskey* v. *Kemp*, a case in which the Supreme Court in 1987 was invited in by Amsterdam, McCleskey's lawyer, to invalidate the death penalty on grounds of racially unequal imposition but declined to do so. Central to the challenge was a statistical study that, the authors argue (again in tension with their initial stringency about the use of statistics by the law), showed conclusively that after correction for all relevant factors juries in Georgia, the state in which McCleskey had been condemned, were significantly more likely to impose the death penalty on the murderer of a white person than on the murderer, of whatever race, of a black person. Amsterdam and Bruner assume without argument that the study proves the unconstitutionality of the death penalty. Yet this might be thought to depend on whether murderers of whites are being

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punished too severely or murderers of blacks too leniently. If the latter, which is what the authors suggest when they accuse Georgia of "using its murder laws to protect the lives of its black and white citizens unequally," then abolishing the death penalty, and therefore reducing the likelihood that the murderer of a black will be executed (for some murderers of blacks are executed in Georgia, albeit a smaller percentage than of murderers of whites), will make potential black murder victims even less well-protected by the law than they are now.

This paradox goes unremarked. Amsterdam and Bruner doubtless think that there is no social value at all to the death penalty; and if that is right then the racial difference in its imposition could not be justified—no anomaly in its administration could be. But the authors do not avow such a belief. The book states that Justice Powell, the author of the majority opinion in *McCleskey*, changed his mind after he retired. Amsterdam and Bruner infer that he had been bamboozled into voting against McCleskey by "rhetoric's magic." The reference is to the rhetoric of Powell's own opinion. But normally judges vote before they write the opinion justifying the position for which they voted.

This tendentious book ends in a fury over affirmative action. Amsterdam and Bruner regard criticism of affirmative action as the product of racism pure and simple, or of a selfish desire to preserve the "traditional privileges" of white Americans, or as an irrational response to economic insecurity and to decades of erosion of public order that culminated in the Oklahoma City bombing. All of these developments have made white Americans "suspicious, grasping, clannish, and ruthless." Moreover, it is only blacks, in their telling, who are denied affirmative action, since the very fact of our permitting immigration, even if the immigrants must pay their own way, is a form of affirmative action. The authors sardonically describe this as "welcoming immigrants." There is no reference to recent legislation excluding immigrants, or to the exploitation of, and discrimination against, immigrants.

In their tendentiousness, and in their obliviousness to the problems of irrationalism, self-reference, and the reversal of cause and effect, Amsterdam and Bruner exhibit the parochialism of modern intellectual elites, left as well as right. As liberal professors cocooned in a liberal intellectual community (the community of academic lawyers and psychologists) in a liberal political community (New York City), they take for granted an outlook that assumes, without any felt need to argue or to present evidence, the soundness of their version of legal liberalism. This complacent assumption blinds them to the flaws in their approach. But they themselves put their finger on the problem when they observe that "familiarity insulates habitual ways of thinking from inspections that might find them senseless, needless, and unserviceable." ■

Wild in the Original

By RICHARD HOWARD

François Villon's The Legacy & The Testament translated by Louis Simpson

(Story Line Press, 256 pp., $32)

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF François Villon have proved discordant. Here is "Where are the snows of yesteryear?", there is "Where is the drift of last year's snow?". Yet images of the poet himself are pretty consistent. Pound, who composed an opera about Villon, and Rossetti, Swinburne, and Louis Simpson seem to be proposing the same singer, if hardly the same song. In order to reach the latter from the former with some security, it is best to begin with what is known or may be plausibly assumed about the poet from archival sources (university records, judicial proceedings, royal pardons), and from internal evidence found in the poetry. The latter, for instance, tells us when Villon composed his two major poems, of which Simpson has produced the newest and the strongest translations.

François de Montcorbier, or des Loges, was born in Paris in April 1431, the year Joan of Arc was burned at the stake.

RICHARD HOWARD is a poet and a translator. He teaches in the School of Arts at Columbia University.

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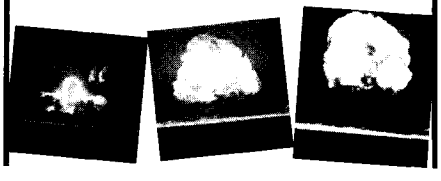

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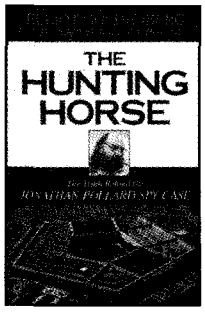

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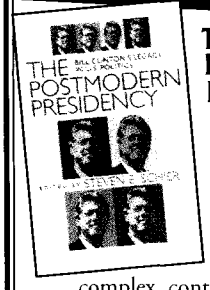

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Fatherless at an early age, the boy was entrusted by his mother to the care of Guillaume de Villon, chaplain of a church in the Latin Quarter and a professor of canon law. Eventually the poet took the name of this adopted father, and by the age of twenty-five he was known only as François Villon. Enrolled in the Faculté des Arts of the University of Paris, Villon received his master of arts degree at the age of twenty-one. The best-documented episode of his student life was a violent encounter with a priest that resulted in the priest's death and two royal pardons. As Pierre Mac Orlan puts it, neither Villon nor his friends belonged to the bourgeoisie or to the literary aristocracy, though he must have been known to this latter world, if not at his true worth, then at least as an entertaining poet. In 1463 the poet was banished from Paris for ten years for his part in a street brawl that ended on the gallows for two of his companions.

There is no record of his life beyond this date. Works of Villon were first published in 1489 (André Gide believed that the poet was still alive at the time); and they were reprinted in Paris and Lyon at least nine times before 1500 by prominent booksellers. In these works, the *Lais* (Legacies) and the later *Testament*, a poem of some 2,000 lines into which Villon inserted a number of *ballades*, some written earlier, others at the same time as the main poem, the poet constructed in careful stanzas the record of a wild life of error, poverty, suffering, and disappointments in love. Parodying the legal forms of a testamentary disposition, Villon makes ironic, pathetic, and facetious bequests to many persons, including his old mother and foster father, comrades and whores, tavernkeepers and jailers, court officials and the executions—all variously bitter, melancholy, humorous, and remarkably free of conventional rhetoric and moralizing.

From the start, the legend of the trickster poet, a drunkard and a thief (or worse), is implicit in his works—the goliard who swears by one of his balls (*sur couillon*) that he is love's martyr. This image was manfully sustained by Saint-Beuve himself, who declared the "*Ballade des Dames*" to be "*un cri de génie et de sentiment*," a cry of inspired feeling. Rabelais had praised the giddy poet as anything but tragic, as merely a *bon folastre* (on whom, Gaultier claimed, he modeled the boisterous Panurge). Indeed, most of the French romantics, from Murger to Michelet, including Hugo (who was said to admire Villon greatly, though he did not include him among his ninety-six "great poets of the world"), overlooked the authentic nature of his poetry about as readily as they overlooked the sensational impostures of his biography.

About the same time that Walter Besant discovered Villon for England, in 1868, Banville, Baudelaire, and Rimbaud were the first French poets to read him as a master as well as a victim, a creator as well as a criminal. Subsequent parallels with Verlaine, Laforgue, Corbière, Max Jacob, Genet, Brecht, and Boris Vian have been more or less strenuously proposed. Meanwhile, late-Victorian translations of Villon by Rossetti and Swinburne still stand at the gates of our English-language modernity, a brandished (if unrepeatable) virtuosity.

I HAVE POTTED this literary historiette because translations of Villon in our day frequently recapitulate its features without necessarily being conscious of their condition; Santayana's crack about our being doomed to repeat history if we ignore it applies nicely to the translation of poetry. Simpson, a strong poet, a severe critic, and a really truculent translator (see his *Modern Poets of France: A Bilingual Anthology*), has rehearsed the facts, and a great many of the assumptions to be derived from them, in his nineteen-page preface and in his lively notes (which, alas, are not keyed to lines of the poems, so that it is extremely difficult to keep track of his pugnacious scholarship). Yet Simpson has determined that to understand everything is to forgive (himself) everything; and he is apparently content to supply lines and figures of his own invention to fill up the stanzas, to approximate the musculature of the verse, and to arrive punctually at the rhymes. (Pound observed that Villon always rhymes on the definite word.)

Consider a couple of characteristic moments. Here is the second stanza of "The Legacy,", the earlier and shorter of the two major poems, a poem that is invariably cited as charged with Villon's typical resonance:

> En ce temps que j'ay dit devant,
> Sur le Noel, morte saison,
> Que les loups se vivent de vent
> Et qu'on se tient en sa maison,
> Pour le frimas, pres du tison,
> Me vint ung vouloir de brisier
> La tres amoureuse prison
> Qui souloit mon coeur debrisier.

With this poem, Simpson serves himself better than anyone else: that is, he makes a better poem in English out of it than any of his predecessors. But he has made it his own poem, perhaps necessarily, in which almost no phrase of Villon's text is given literally, and in which we find many inventions for which there is no equivalent in the original. (This is Peter Dale's cop-out concerning his own version of this poem, from 1973: "Villon cannot really be trans-

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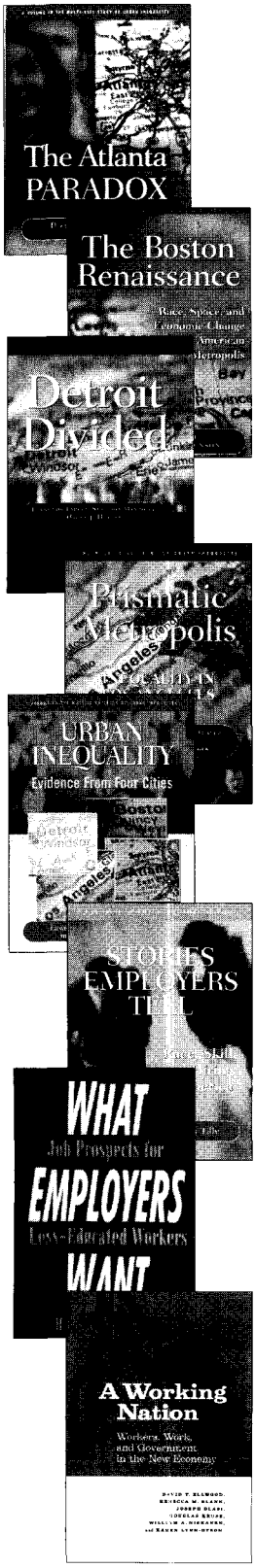

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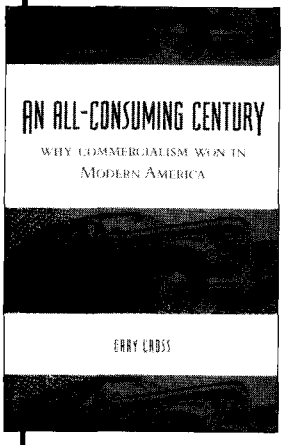

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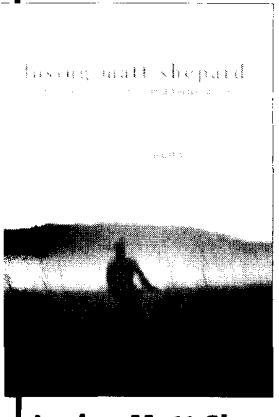

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lated; he can only be dislocated. He has muscle, he has music, and a mastery of form. In English translation you cannot convincingly and consistently have all three.")

Here is Simpson's version:

> When Christmas came around once more,
> The season when the world is dead,
> The frost is thick and hard and hoar
> And wolves upon the wind are fed,
> I had one idea in my head,
> To break out of my prison cell,
> The love that for so long had made
> My life here on this earth a hell.

One notes, first and immediately, that the world in Villon's poem is not dead, as Simpson has it: there is no "world" at all, there is merely this particular Christmas (not a recurrent one) which, in the French poet's happy and bitterly ironic phrase, is "dead season". One notes also that there is no feeding of wolves at all, as Simpson has it, but rather that they "live on" wind. Simpson leaves out people staying indoors, close to the fire, because of the frost, which is neither thick nor hard nor hoar, as Simpson has it, but which merely shuts one up in the house. And one notes that there is no cell, no idea, no head, and above all no life on earth being made a hell, as Simpson has it. There is merely love's imprisonment, and the desire or the longing or the urge to break out of that prison which, the poet says, was breaking his heart.

These new figures are not present for Villon, but they are present for Simpson, because Simpson must rhyme, and rhyme rationally, and because he must be "strong" as only Louis Simpson is strong. They compel him to omit heartbreak (that celebrated Villon phenomenon) altogether, and to adduce image-systems (including ideas in the speaker's head, life on earth being made a hell, and love "that for so long" had infernalized his life, a temporal metamorphosis that Villon does not mention). Consider a second instance, the beginning of the third stanza of the famous prayer that Villon wrote for his mother to offer the Virgin in his later, greater poem "The Testament":

> Femme je suis povrette et ancienne
> Qui rien ne sçay, oncques lettre ne lus
> Au moustier voy dont suis paroissienne
> Paradis paint ou sont harpes et lus
> Et ung unfer ou dampnez sons boullus
> L'ung me fait paour, l'autre joye et liesse

Here are Simpson's lines:

> I am a poor woman and very old.
> I cannot read and I know nothing.
> At the church I belong to, I behold
> Heaven painted, harps and lutes are playing
> And a Hell where the damned are boiling.
> Heaven gives me joy, Hell great distress.

Too bad that the necessity to rhyme must take precedence over the ventriloquism for which Villon is so rightly praised. In the original, the poet's mother sees (would this woman ever "behold" anything?) harps and lutes (which she does not tell us "are playing"); and once she has described the character of Heaven and of Hell, she is both simpler and more dramatic than her latest translator: "one gives me a scare, the other joy and gladness". Simpson is ever so much neater, even nattier, with "Heaven gives me joy, Hell great distress," but in his line we do not hear the old woman so clearly as when Villon has her say "the one ... the other", like a crone sorting cabbages at market.

This characterization (as I hear it) is afforded by Galway Kinnell in his version, which appeared in 1977, with a couple of the drawbacks of his virtues:

> I'm just a poor old woman
> Who knows nothing and can't read
> On the walls of my parish church I see
> A paradise painted with harps and lutes
> And a hell where they boil the damned
> One gives me a fright one great bliss and joy

Unpunctuated as in the original (Simpson, like most of Villon's translators, points for the modern reader's perhaps supererogatory convenience), Kinnell's version gives us the felicity of parish/paradise, and the painting of harps and lutes is not heard by the speaker, but merely seen. I quibble over "*just* a poor old woman," which seems to me to add a note of status which is not suggested—or at least not emphasized—by "*Femme je suis povrette et ancienne*", all very normative and merely part of the narrative. But this ventriloquial quality is Kinnell's virtue, even if his literalism affords what Henry James would call "loose baggy monsters" pretending to be stanzas.

Simpson never abandons the tensions of verse, and his rhymes are much less obtrusive (and misleading) than Peter Dale's, who is so eager to make a recognizable lyric form that he readily foregoes not only Villon's tone (which Kinnell is so good at catching) but also Villon's detail (which Simpson usually manages to maintain):

> A poor woman of little worth,
> I'm ignorant, can't read or spell.
> I see in church the heavenly mirth

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Of lutes and harps or the damned in Hell Boiling...

And how can Dale bear to omit the cruel self-qualification: "je suis povrette et *ancienne*"?

Throughout, Simpson is demonstrably conscious that he is making a poem out of what he has powerfully read, and he has not permitted the usual translator's morality ("but that's not what the author wrote") to deflect him from his design. "I have changed Villon's words here, to keep the form of his verse," he acknowledges in the notes, whereby he is telling us more about his apprehension of the nature of Villon's poetry than about his own resources as a translator. To the service of that poetry Simpson has brought the instrumental qualities of his considerable talents as a versifying medium—superior to any that have been exhibited elsewhere.

What this may mean, for or against Villon, and for or against Louis Simpson, readers must decide for themselves. As a translator of this kind, Simpson must perform some of the most overbearing operations in the history of modern translation, and he does not shirk the onus of such plastic surgery. This may be due to his loyalty to the art and to his strength as a practitioner—or to his lack of interest in what is specifically Villon rather than in what is successfully Simpson. Certainly this new version is a sign of the original's continuing life, though that original may offer itself more *originally*, and less truculently, in the clumsier readings of Simpson's predecessors. ■

A God-Haunted Family

By GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

The Knox Brothers by Penelope Fitzgerald

(Counterpoint, 288 pp., $26)

I.

ALMOST HALF A century ago, Noel Annan published a celebrated essay called "The Intellectual Aristocracy," tracing the interlocking genealogies that tie together, by birth and marriage, the great names of nineteenth- and twentieth-century English culture: Macaulay, Trevelyan, Arnold, Huxley, Darwin, Wedgwood, Galton, Stephen, Wilberforce, Dicey, Thackeray, Russell, Webb, Keynes, Strachey, Toynbee. Tucked into my copy of the book containing that essay is a yellowed clipping of a review written a dozen years later of *The Amberley Papers*, the journals and letters of Bertrand Russell's parents. The reviewer, Philip Toynbee, does not mention Annan, but he too speculates about the "mysteries of heredity" that connect the philosopher and radical activist Bertrand Russell with the Victorian Whig aristocracy (a political as well as intellectual aristocracy). Lord Amberley was the son of the prime minister Lord Russell and, "as if by inheritance," a friend or acquaintance of such other eminent Victorians as Mill, Carlyle, Grote, Darwin, and Huxley. But the best confirmation of Annan's thesis comes in a casual comment by the reviewer: "It happens that Kate Amberley's younger sister was my own great-grandmother"—that "monstrous old tyrant," as Toynbee remembers her.

Annan might have included another family name that deserves a place in this pantheon of intellectual aristocrats: Knox. In 1977, that omission was repaired with the publication of *The Knox Brothers* by Penelope Fitzgerald, born Penelope Knox, the daughter of the oldest of the brothers, better known in her own right as a distinguished novelist. The present reissue of that work (with a slightly expanded foreword) is all the more welcome, not only because a most gifted writer introduces us to a most unusual family, but also because we are reminded of an intellectual heritage that is far more interesting and varied than we may have thought.

The Knox family story starts, as it ends, with a medley of religions. Ardent Presbyterians settled in Northern Ireland, where some of its members "lived to be hanged," as the patriarch of the family put it, when they were implicated in the uprising against the English in the late-eighteenth

GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB is the author, most recently, of *One Nation, Two Cultures*, which will appear in paperback in January.

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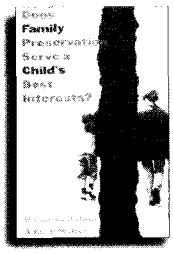

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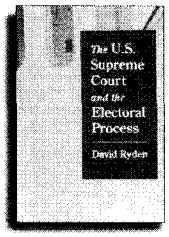

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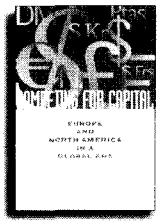

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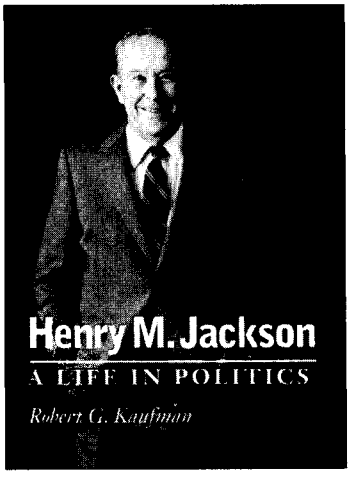

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century. One of the twenty-six children sought his fortune in the West Indies, married a sickly heiress, and returned to London as a merchant, only to discover that his wife's estate had passed on to a cousin. His son George (the grandfather of the Knox brothers), adopting the Anglicanism of his mother, took orders, and became a chaplain in the service of the East India Company in Madras. It was there that he met his wife, a Quaker, who was equally impoverished and had been sent off to India rather than going into service as a governess.

Spared that ignominious fate, she married the chaplain—the kind of Irishman, Fitzgerald tells us, who, like Samuel Beckett's Watt, "had never smiled, but thought he knew how it was done." They returned to England in 1855 with their seven children (another was born later); and, having served in one curacy after another, George finally settled in a village near Croydon as the secretary of the Church Missionary Society. A cross between "Ulster thrift and Quaker sobriety," the family was spiritually as well as economically impoverished. Books were restricted, novels forbidden, and floggings administered by a father who turned out to be as tyrannical as his own father had been. (And as eccentric: he never looked at a train schedule "but simply went down to the station and complained to the station-master if one was not ready for him.")

WHERE THE OLDER generations had escaped to the Indies, the younger one found refuge in education. Interestingly, it was the father, otherwise so narrow-minded and repressive, who insisted upon this—for the girls as well as the boys; one of his daughters went to Oxford on a scholarship and became the principal of a college in Toronto. His son Edmund (the father of the Knox brothers), also on a scholarship, received an excellent classical training at St. Paul's; he later remembered with satisfaction that it cost his family all of one shilling, the obligatory tip given to the porter by a new student. The classes were accompanied by daily beatings (this, too, seemed to be obligatory), but these were mild, "largely owing to the absent-mindedness of the High Master." St. Paul's was followed, again thanks to a scholarship, by Corpus Christi, Oxford, where Edmund received three Firsts (highest honors), in Greats (classics and philosophy), Law, and Modern History.

Ordained and elected a fellow of Merton College, Edmund rejected the dour low-church Anglicanism of his father, preferring the Quaker tradition of his mother, which he transformed into a humane and genial Evangelicalism. He even developed

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a taste for novels (for Austen and Trollope especially). Although college fellows were generally not allowed to marry, at just about this time Merton amended its statutes to permit the marriage of four fellows. In 1878, Edmund took advantage of this dispensation to marry Ellen Penelope French, the daughter of the rector of a neighboring church. Six years (and four children) later, he left Oxford to take up a curacy in Leicestershire.

Ellen brought to the family a very different kind of religious background, reminding us again of the extraordinary diversity not only of the Anglican ministry but of the Evangelical as well. Her father was almost a parody of the religious enthusiast, "a saint," Fitzgerald tells us, "holy in the noblest sense of the word, and as exasperating as all saints." Thomas French, the son of a comfortable, conventional clergyman, had also gone to India—not, like George Knox, to serve as a chaplain to the English community, but rather as a missionary to the natives. Living a life of extreme austerity, reading the Bible to lepers and preaching to the pagans, he somehow found the time and the energy to master seven Indian dialects, marry the daughter of a wealthy Quaker family, and sire eight children.

After brief stays in England, he returned to India, leaving his family behind. Appointed Bishop of Lahore, he served there until 1889, when ill health obliged him to return to England. Within a year he found his way back to the Middle East, this time without position or authority. Dressed as a Muslim, he preached at the gate of the mosque or in the bazaar, handed out bibles to the natives, and died in Muscat (of near-starvation, among other things) in 1891, at the age of sixty-six. (That same year Edmund's father died in far more comfortable circumstances in England.)

It was in 1891, too, that Edmund left his agreeable country parish for an industrial district in Birmingham. He welcomed it as an opportunity to serve in a larger, more challenging world, but it was a wrench for his family—four boys and two girls between the ages of ten and three, a lively, boisterous group (very different from the household in which Edmund himself had grown up). The new vicarage, a small house in a typically dark, narrow, and smoke-begrimed street, could not have been more different from their old rambling, cheerful country house. The children adapted well to their new quarters, but their mother was not so fortunate. Ailing since the birth of her last child, her health deteriorated rapidly, and she died within a year.

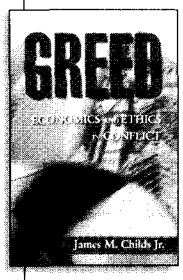
The children were dispersed among relatives, only the oldest, Edmund, remaining at home with his father and an aunt. The two girls, Winifred and Ethel, and one of the boys, Dillwyn, had the misfortune to be sent to a widowed great-aunt in Eastbourne, who had the temperament of their grandfather and whose "Protestantism was of the 'black' variety". The younger boys Wilfred and Ronald fared far better at the home of an uncle, a good-natured, absent-minded vicar in a country parish in Lincolnshire, whose Evangelicalism was of the "sweet and primitive" kind, and who managed to share their childish pleasures while cramming into them, almost unwittingly, it seemed, an impressive amount of learning. "The boys," Fitzgerald observes, "were beginning to resemble savages, speaking Latin and Greek."

When the father was appointed Suffragan Bishop of Coventry four years later, "it became evident," he said, "that I must marry again," for the sake of the diocese if not his children. He found a suitable candidate in Ethel Newton, a vicar's daughter. Fortunately for him, and, more, for his children, this young woman (she was twenty-seven, twenty years younger than he) was not only familiar with the role that she had to play; she was also good-looking, good-natured, and cultivated. Although she had no formal education, she learned classical Greek "simply because she wanted to." One of the family jokes was the diary entry on her wedding day: "Finished the Antigone. Married Bip [Bishop]."

With the Bishop's remarriage, the family was happily reunited, "Mrs. K.," as the children called her, adapting to a life far more austere than the luxurious one to which she was accustomed. (Although her father was very rich, he made it a matter of principle not to settle money on his daughters when they married.) She also managed to cope with children who were far more argumentative and unconventional than her own siblings. It was a cheerful household but also an earnest one, for all the children (with the exception of the oldest, Ethel, who was somewhat retarded) crammed for scholarships, a preparation "so intensive," Fitzgerald remarks, "as to be only just over the borderline of sanity."

All the children did get scholarships, all to elite schools: Edmund to Rugby and Corpus Christi College, Oxford; Winifred to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford; Dillwyn to Eton and King's College, Cambridge; Wilfred to Rugby and Trinity College, Oxford; and Ronald to Eton and Balliol College, Oxford. But this is all they had in common. For the rest, while they remained loyal to each other as a family, their lives, their careers, their dispositions, and, above all, their religious affiliations took them in very different directions.

Contest and Conflict



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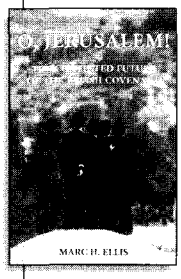

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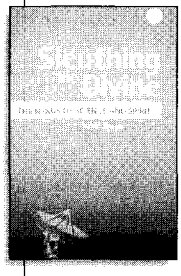

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II.

Penelope Fitzgerald, a skillful novelist, succeeds in intertwining the lives of the brothers at each stage of their careers, thus keeping them intact as a family while watching them diverge as individuals. (Occasionally the lives get too intertwined for the reader's comfort, one brother succeeding another with hardly a break in the text, sometimes in the same paragraph.) The divergences of career are easily encapsulated: Edmund, editor of *Punch*; Dillwyn, cryptographer; Wilfred, Anglo-Catholic priest; Ronald, Roman Catholic priest. But the devil—or God, in this case—is in the details, and the details of their respective lives and minds make for a fascinating saga.

Edmund, the oldest, was also the first to disappoint the father. His scholarship at Corpus Christi was suspended for "frivolous and extravagant" behavior (climbing in after hours over spiked walls, organizing extracurricular and unauthorized entertainments, spending more time at dining clubs than at lectures), and it was re-instated only after he paid a fine and did penance by mastering the whole of Herodotus and Plato's *Republic*. After completing the course of studies and passing the first examination for an Honors degree, he left Oxford without any degree, having decided to become a writer. He had a special talent for light verse; there was no word, he boasted (and frequently demonstrated to the amusement of his family and friends) for which he could not find a rhyme. After brief stints teaching at a preparatory school in Manchester and as a sub-editor on *Pall Mall Magazine*, he became a regular contributor to *Punch* under the pen name "Evoe."

This was hardly the career that the father had envisaged for his namesake, but still more disturbing was the young man's religious skepticism, or at best indifference. The Bishop was only slightly mollified by his son's marriage, in 1912, to the daughter of the Bishop of Lincoln, which was suitably reported in the local paper under the headline "Bishop's Son Weds Bishop's Daughter." With the outbreak of war, Edmund, then thirty-four and the father of a one-year-old, joined the army. Wounded in the battle of Ypres in 1917, he was invalided home. He resumed writing for *Punch* (parodies as well as verses), joined the regular staff (with a regular income) in 1921, and served as editor from 1932 to 1945.

It might have been said of Edmund, as was said of the previous editor of *Punch*, that "he is the kind of man who doesn't take his humour seriously." But he did take it seriously in at least one respect. Under his editorship the magazine was notable not only for its distinctive wit and humor (so distinctive that it was nearly incomprehensible to Americans), but also for its progressive stance on social issues and its consistent hostility to Nazism. After the war, with his retirement from *Punch*, he continued as a freelance writer and as a local celebrity in Hampstead Heath, where he had moved with his second wife (his first having died before the war). He long outlived his younger brothers, dying in 1971 at the age of ninety.

If Edmund's profession and irreligion took him far from the world of his father, Dillwyn's circle of friends and more aggressive irreligion were a much greater rupture. At Eton, Dillwyn became what Fitzgerald calls a "ferocious agnostic"—ferocious atheist might be more accurate. With his great friend and classmate John Maynard Keynes, he undertook "experiments, intellectual and sexual, to resolve the question of what things are necessary to life"—things that most emphatically did not include religion. His friendship with Keynes, and presumably their experiments, were continued at King's, where a word was coined for Dillwyn: "noxian," meaning "noxious and anti-Christian." Unlike Keynes, he turned down an invitation to join the Apostles, the secret (or not so secret) society that had the highest quotient of homosexuals as well as intellectuals. But he was very much part of that milieu, "expanding cautiously," as Fitzgerald delicately puts it, "in the Apostolic friendship." If he was not himself overtly homosexual, he attracted those who were undeniably so, including Lytton Strachey, who frankly declared his love for him, which was apparently unrequited.

Dillwyn's main intellectual passion, then and later, was Greek poetry, and he was delighted to assist his mentor, the renowned Greek scholar Walter Headlam, to prepare a definitive edition of the poet Herodas and decipher some papyrus fragments of his poems. (Fitzgerald neglects to mention the fact that Herodas was known, if at all, for his bawdy verses.) That project earned Dillwyn a fellowship at King's. With the outbreak of World War I, rejected by the army because of his bad eyesight, he was recruited by Naval Intelligence to join the band of cryptographers charged with breaking the German war codes. The head of his department, wondering why the Germans did not suspect that their code had been compromised, could only suppose that it was because of "the English reputation for stupidity." (But the head, Fitzgerald wryly notes, was a Scotsman.) In fact, the work called upon the imagination and the patience of very talented men and women, among whom Dillwyn was perhaps the most gifted, applying to this task the same talents that had proved so effective in the explication of obscure Greek meters and the reconstruction of the papyrus fragments.

Instead of returning to Cambridge after the war, Dillwyn remained at the Foreign Office as a cryptographer. Yet he found time to publish his edition of Herodas as well as another even more esoteric work of Greek scholarship. Like Keynes, he eventually married and, unlike him, had two sons (one of whom was named Maynard after his godfather). In the 1930s he was largely responsible for breaking the German code known as Enigma, and in the early years of World War II, stationed at Bletchley, he had the distinction of decoding the Enigma Variation, which played a crucial role in several engagements during the war. He himself did not survive the war, dying of cancer in 1943.

It is hard to know which of the sons were more displeasing to the father: the two older ones, who were conspicuously lacking in religious faith, or the two younger ones, whose faith, in the opinion of the Bishop, was excessive and perverted. At Rugby, Wilfred found himself obsessed with the "social question," as it was called, or the problem of poverty; and he became a socialist à la John Ruskin and F. D. Maurice. Hoping to remove him from the "noxian" influence of Dillwyn, his father encouraged him to go to Oxford rather than Cambridge. There, after experiencing a temporary loss of faith, he recovered sufficiently to consider entering the priesthood.

That was small consolation for his father, because Wilfred, like his younger brother Ronald, was a "Romaniser," drawn to the Anglo-Catholic movement whose rituals and sacraments were anathema to an Evangelical like his father. As if this were not distressing enough, he was attracted to that sect of high-church Anglicanism, led by William Temple and George Lansbury, which was infused with a strong social as well as religious mission, so that Wilfred, now resident at the Trinity Mission in the East End, felt obliged to inform his father that he was a Christian socialist and, worse, a member of the Labour Party. (The trade union meetings, he later recalled, where they discussed the best means of acquiring the "equal distribution of the means of production," took place in cocoa-rooms in the district, cocoa being "the great conspiratorial drink" of the time.)

Shortly before the war, preparing for his ordination, Wilfred voluntarily (this was not required of the Anglo-Catholic priesthood) took a vow of celibacy, and of

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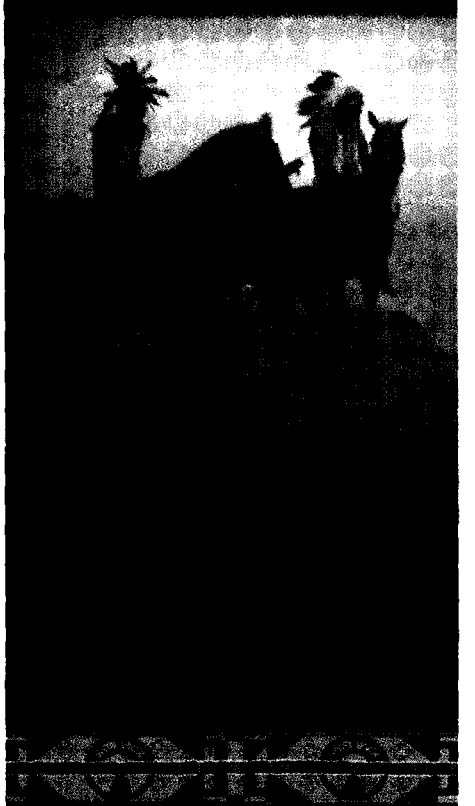

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poverty as well. Unable to serve as a chaplain in the army because of the prejudice against Anglo-Catholics, he worked in the intelligence branch of the War Office, where his two brothers were already installed. After the war, seeking a community of like-minded souls, he joined the Oratory of the Good Shepherd in Cambridge, a religious brotherhood of unmarried priests and laymen, where piety and eccentricity thrived together. "It is fortunate for us," one of the Superiors declared, "that loving and liking are not the same thing. We are not called upon to like our neighbour, but to love him"—upon which Fitzgerald observes that this comment shows "how practical unworldliness can be."

When Wilfred was not gardening (his favorite activity), he wrote a book on meditation and prayer and scholarly works of apologetics and theology, one of which, *St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles*, earned him a fellowship in the British Academy. With the closing of the Oratory house in the beginning of World War II, he became chaplain at Pembroke College, where he taught undergraduates and ministered to them in his usual devoted but eccentric fashion. "He was the sort of man," one of his students said, "who understood every natural joy and sorrow that we could feel at that age, but couldn't find his own collar-stud." (Fitzgerald corrects the record: "Wilfred never had any collar-studs; he used a paper-clip.") Malcolm Muggeridge, a later editor of *Punch*, recalled seeing Wilfred in Cambridge at a Eucharist service on a very cold morning with a hot water bottle under his vestments, giving him "a slight air of pregnancy." Wilfred died in 1950, after a painful bout of cancer.

WHERE DILLWYN DISCOVERED atheism at Eton, Ronald, the youngest of the brothers, discovered Anglo-Catholicism. Reading a history of the Tractarian movement, he later recalled, he "trembled for Newman, mourned for him as lost to the Church, and rose with the knowledge that somewhere, beyond the circles I moved in, there was a cause for which clergymen had been sent to prison and noble lives spent; a cause which could be mine." His father, for whom Tractarianism was almost as bad as Romanism, hoped that the youngest of his children (and his favorite) would outgrow this heresy. But Ronald was no more obliging than the others. A brilliant speaker and debater, witty, high-spirited, extremely sociable and popular, he had offers that would have brought him into the world of high politics. Instead he accepted a fellowship at Trinity and became the center of a cult of high-church Anglicans. As private tutor to the young Harold Macmillan, he introduced the future prime minister to "Ronnie's religion," as it was called, but he was shortly dismissed by Mrs. Macmillan when he refused to refrain from speaking about religion to her son. When Macmillan came to Balliol, their friendship resumed.

In this and other of Ronald's friendships (as in Dillwyn's), there are at least intimations of homosexuality. Evelyn Waugh, in his biography of Ronald Knox, mentions the much sought-after boy at Eton whom Ronald "loved," and whom he established in his "little court of troubadours." Similarly, Fitzgerald speaks of his intense feelings for one of his students at Trinity, Guy Lawrence, "very fair, very handsome and highly strung," whom he helped nurse through a nervous breakdown. Although she makes it clear (like Waugh) that Ronald "loved" his friends, and Guy above all, she is confident that these friendships, although "deeply emotional," were "in no way sensual" and "physical presence was in no way part of them." Perhaps it was because Ronald did not have that confidence that he chose, when ordained as an Anglican priest in 1912, to take the vow of celibacy (as Wilfred did at about the same time).

"Between ourselves, Winnie," the Bishop once remarked to his daughter, "I cannot understand what it is that the dear boys [Wilfred and Ronald] see in the Blessed Virgin Mary." Fitzgerald explains that while Wilfred was drawn to the rites and dogmas of Anglo-Catholicism by a need for communal "wholeness," Ronald did so out of a regard for "authority." "If you have a sloppy religion," Ronald reasoned, "you get a sloppy atheism." Anglo-Catholicism was the least sloppy form of Protestantism, but still too sloppy for his taste. In 1917, after agonizing for years over whether "to pope," Ronald was received into the Catholic Church and ordained as a priest two years later. To the family, Fitzgerald says, "Ronnie was 'lost,'" divided from them by "an invisible door of iron."

As a secular priest unattached to a religious order or parish, Ronald's first assignment was as a teacher of Latin in a seminary and boys' school in Hertfordshire. Although he performed ably, it was a world into which he did not fit comfortably. He was happier vacationing with Lord and Lady Lovat at their castle in Scotland, and writing the light essays and columns that earned him the tribute, by the *Daily Mail*, of being "the wittiest young man in England." In 1926, he was pleased to be appointed university chaplain for Catholics at Oxford, which gave him more time to write the articles and books (including detective stories) that

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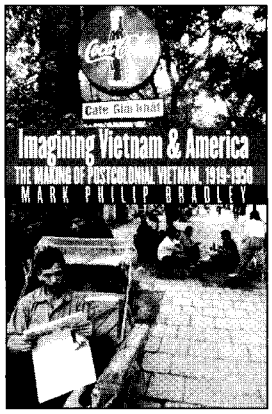
were making him something of a celebrity, and, not unimportant, supplementing his modest chaplaincy stipend. (Evelyn Waugh, describing his detective novels as ingenious, scrupulous, and logical, added, in his usual misogynist fashion, that "very few women have ever enjoyed them.")

But these distractions began to pall, and Ronald became disaffected with students who were obsessed, as he saw it, with sex, travel, and European politics, in that order. Out of sorts with the young, he was also out of sorts with his times. He liked to think of himself not as middle-aged but as "medieval," and he refused to have anything to do with such modern contraptions as airplanes, telephones, or movies; the last good invention, he insisted, was the toast-rack. (He relented somewhat in his old age, traveling to Africa by plane and even going to a movie there.)

Resigning the chaplaincy in 1937, and giving up the novels as well, he took up residency at the Acton estate at Aldenham in Shropshire (on the invitation of Lady Acton, the wife of the grandson of the great historian). There he devoted himself to his grand enterprise, a new translation of the New Testament. The translation was not an unequivocal success. Conceived as the work of a commission, it was taken over, in effect, by Ronald, who consulted his colleagues only when he was confronted with some exceptionally obscure passage. Completed in 1942, its publication was delayed for three years until it was finally, and reluctantly, accepted by the hierarchy as an authorized version. While it sold moderately well, it was met with enough scholarly criticism to make it, his biographer says, an "exercise in humility"; Ronald jocularly promised that on his deathbed he would forgive his reviewers. (He was spared an even more trying exercise in humility: the publication after his death of two more scholarly authorized versions of the New Testament.)

When the Actons closed their Aldenham home after the war, Ronald was installed as chaplain (and paying guest!) at the Asquith estate in Somerset, where he continued to write books on a variety of subjects. Oddly enough, Fitzgerald does not mention the most ambitious and best known of those books, *Enthusiasm*, a study of charismatic movements in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Published in 1950, it was a book that he had been working on intermittently for three decades. He himself was dissatisfied with it; having gone through so many revisions and changing viewpoints over the years, it was, he confessed in the preface, a "hotchpotch." Yet it was reasonably well received (perhaps because of that disarming preface) and is still in print. (In print as well are paperback editions of several



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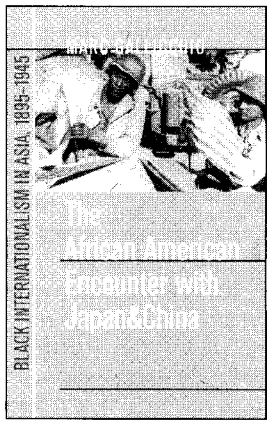

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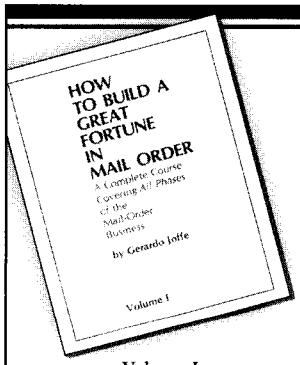
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other books, including the New Testament translation reissued as recently as 1998, and a volume of selections from his works under the title *Quotable Knox*.)

At his death in 1957, Ronald had the distinction of being England's most famous Catholic priest—"a normal, pipe-smoking, income-taxed Englishman," Fitzgerald observes, "not a Jesuit, not a mystic, no black-coats, no sweeping gestures." Not quite, however, your normal Englishman. A reader of Waugh's biography may remember him, in his last years, as a brilliant eccentric—a crossword addict who challenged himself by doing the *Times* crossword by reading only the horizontal clues, filling in the perpendiculars by guesswork, and then verifying them by their clues.

III.

One of the remarkable things about this family is that, in spite of all their differences—and differences on matters that were of supreme importance to them, matters of life and death, of redemption and salvation—they continued to remain a family. Although the Bishop cut Ronald out of his will and did not attend the ceremonies at which one son was made an Anglican priest and another a Catholic one, they all continued to meet—to argue vehemently, but also to share familial joys and sorrows. Even as the Bishop, in retirement in Kent, wrote tracts refuting Anglo-Catholicism and defending the traditional Prayer Book, he welcomed his errant sons on their occasional visits home.

In his memoirs, published two years before his death in 1937, the Bishop reflected upon his relationship with his curious assortment of children: "I have not succeeded, as my father succeeded, in bringing my children up entirely in their father's faith, and for this I take no small share of the blame, so far as it is blame, to myself." He recalled Ronald, as a schoolboy, once completing a Greek phrase with the line, "It is our boast that we are far ahead of our parents."

> These words [the Bishop commented] seem to me to embody, at once, the effects of a Public School education, the spirit and temper of the age in which my children grew up, and the exceptional vivacity of their character. They were determined to be better than their parents had been, and to do better than their parents had done, and to live in the spirit of the restless first decades of the twentieth century. Who shall say that this ambition was in itself wrong or unnatural? That it led some of them in directions often very costly to those whom they loved and who loved them, cannot be denied, and here I find the saddest of the experiences and remembrances of my life, the records of the most humiliating of my failures.

He concluded, in a spirit of Christian humility—and more, of genuine personal gratitude: "Against these I set the treasure of the full and over-flowing measure of my children's love, surpassing all that I deserve."

It is a poignant commentary by a father who was fully appreciative of the abilities and the achievements of his four remarkable sons, each of whom was distinguished in his own right, and each of whom was an implicit rebuke to himself. It is also a poignant commentary on the sons themselves. The memoir was written when the sons were middle-aged and the "directions" of their lives were set. But if their ambition was "to do better than their parents had done," it is not clear that they succeeded in doing that, then or later. And if the father had cause to regret the failures of his life—the inability to hand down to his sons the religious legacy he had received from his father—the sons had reason to recognize their own failures.

None of them, not even the Bishop, set great store on titles. Yet it must have occurred to his two priest-sons, as to the father, that neither of them had attained the distinction of a bishopric that came almost effortlessly to their father (and their grandfather as well). Ronald, the best known of the brothers, probably the best known English Catholic at the time (and the best known convert since Cardinal Newman), might have been expected to acquire that title; but he never attained any high position in the church, the title "Monsignor" being a purely honorific one bestowed upon him late in life. The hierarchy never quite trusted or respected him, perhaps because of his secular, irreverent writings, perhaps because of his opposition to the modernist theology that was gaining favor in the church.

Nor did the two older sons, outwardly so successful, enjoy an unequivocal satisfaction in their lives and careers. Edmund reached the pinnacle of his profession as editor of *Punch*, but at a time, as he was painfully aware, when that brand of humor was already beginning to be perceived as quaint and provincial; nor was this—the prewar and war years—the most auspicious time to put out a humor magazine. Dillwyn, for his part, had notable triumphs as a cryptographer, but not as the Greek scholar that was his true avocation, if not his vocation. It is not clear why he did not, after World War I, return to Cambridge or accept the professorships elsewhere that

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had been offered him, which might have given him the opportunity to produce something more memorable than two rather obscure monographs.

Early in the book, describing one summer vacation while Edmund was at Oxford, Fitzgerald tells us that he "fell into the melancholy which lay in wait for all the brothers"—this of the witty and fun-loving future editor of *Punch*, who was about to lose his scholarship because he was enjoying himself too much. That tendency to melancholy, treated delicately, almost casually, appears as a refrain throughout the book, as one brother after another passed through, as Wilfred did, a "black night of the soul." Muggeridge, who knew them personally (with the possible exception of Dillwyn), speaks of them as being "God-haunted," some "negatively," rejecting the God that haunted them, others positively, serving that God in their different ways. This perception comes from someone who was himself "God-haunted," having experienced, late in life, a deeply moving religious conversion. Whatever the nature of the Knox melancholia, it gives an added dimension and depth to their lives and careers.

But this book is more than a chronicle of a fascinating family. It is the chronicle of several generations of Englishmen who defy the usual stereotypes—of Englishmen in general and of the religious in particular. For it is a dramatic revelation of the extraordinary variety of types contained within the familiar rubrics: Evangelical bishops as various as the staid and sensible Bishop of Manchester and the saintly ascetic Bishop of Lahore; Anglo-Catholic priests such as Wilfred, the Christian Socialist and Labour Party enthusiast, who was hardly the typical Anglican high-churchman; and Roman Catholic priests such as Ronald, who rejected modernism but had an irreverent streak that made him suspect among the orthodox. (One wonders what the historian Lord Acton would have made of the rather worldly priest who took up residence at Aldenham and undertook a translation of the New Testament that was conspicuously below the historian's standard.)

But it is not only religious stereotypes that are belied by Fitzgerald's narrative; it is class stereotypes as well—most notably, the stereotype of the upper-middle-class Englishman. The Knoxes were undeniably upper-middle-class, even though some of them were quite poor. This book is a salutary reminder that, in Victorian England as in twentieth-century England, there was no necessary correlation between class and income. Neither was there any necessary correlation between class and

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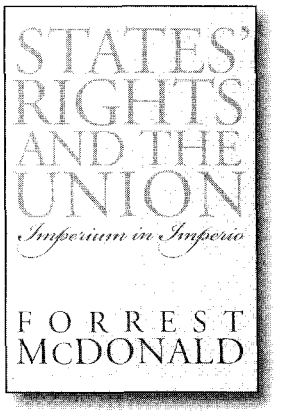

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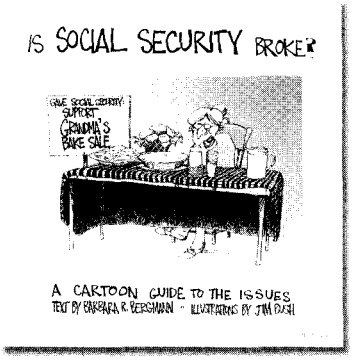

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intellectual or spiritual disposition. Having gone to the best schools (where they seemed not to have suffered any stigma from being on scholarships), they managed to espouse wildly different beliefs, pursue very different careers, and lead utterly different lives.

Fitzgerald does not dwell on the theme of class, but she does make much of education, which is itself a commentary on class. The grandfather, George Knox, had a "mania" for education, as did his son the Bishop, which was perhaps the only quality they had in common. Describing the intensive cramming for scholarships, Fitzgerald explains that "in this family which breathed the air of scholarship, but had constant difficulty in making ends meet, education was the key to the future." It was the means by which the children could achieve the careers that the Bishop anticipated for them: "Winnie was destined for University and, surely, for a brilliant clerical marriage, the three elder boys for the Civil Service, Ronnie for the Evangelical ministry." The obvious irony is the failure of the Bishop's expectations. But perhaps more interesting is the fact that he (like his father before him) should have looked to education, rather than to family relations and social connections, for the welfare of his children. And not just the nominal education that would ensure a respectable life (the pass degree that was the English equivalent of the American "gentleman's C"), but nothing less than a First.

To an American, this is a familiar scenario; but it is one associated with a poor immigrant family seeking to assimilate itself into a new country and culture, rather than a native, well-established, upper-middle-class family. It is all the more surprising to find this in England of all countries, and late-Victorian England at that, which was reputedly so class-ridden, where class distinctions and privileges were presumably decisive. For the Knox family at least (and perhaps for many more than one might think), class was not at all the determining factor in their lives. That is what makes this family so fascinating. Character and belief, not social ambitions and material interests, were what made the brothers so distinctive and so memorable.

IV.

THERE ARE A few biographers, but not many, worthy of their subjects. Almost by definition, the subject of a biography is more important, more notable, than the author of the biography—else the subject would not warrant a biography. At least so it was until recently, when biographers have begun to take it upon themselves to celebrate the "little," the "ordinary" man or woman—in the process celebrating themselves for being so broad-minded and large-hearted. Yet the Knox brothers have found their equal, and the revival of this book is as much a tribute to the author as to the subjects—a memorial tribute to her, unhappily, since she died shortly before its republication.

This, Penelope Fitzgerald's third book, appeared almost a quarter of a century ago when she was sixty. Her first, written two years earlier, was a biography of the pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones; her second was a mystery written to entertain her dying husband. Although she discovered her vocation late in life, this book is the work of an assured writer, displaying the dry wit and the irony, and the learning as well, that she inherited from the Knox family, qualities that are abundantly evident in her own novels.

In a recent introduction to Jane Austen's *Emma*, Fitzgerald remarked of Emma (the character, not the book) that "she has the potentialities of a best-selling novelist." A perceptive reader of *The Knox Brothers* might have predicted that this biographer had the potentialities of a best-selling novelist. Like Austen, Fitzgerald, as a biographer and as a novelist, manages to be ironic, even sardonic at times, without being in the least ungenerous or unsympathetic. She never parades her own cleverness at the expense of her subjects; she never gives way to muckraking or sensationalism. If this book is to be faulted at all, it is because the writer scrupulously excludes herself from the narrative, depriving us of her own memories of this memorable family. (Her only concession to familial acquaintance is her referring to the brothers by their family nicknames.)

If there is a melancholy note in this book, as in her novels, it is because she shares that Knox trait. "I have remained true to my deepest convictions," she told an interviewer two years ago. "I mean to the courage of those who are born to be defeated, the weaknesses of the strong, and the tragedy of misunderstandings and missed opportunities, which I have done my best to treat as comedy, for otherwise how can we manage to bear it?" She was obviously reflecting on her own life, about which she has been admirably reticent, speaking of it only reluctantly and elliptically to insistent interviewers. Married to an alcoholic—a major in the Irish Guards, trained as a barrister but working, when he worked, as a travel agent (he "didn't have much luck in life," Fitzgerald delicately observed)—she became the family provider, taking lowly jobs with the Ministry of Food and the BBC, working in a bookstore, editing a small literary journal, teaching at a school for child actors, and moving frequently to ever-cheaper accommodations. When their barge sank, the family moved into public housing. One is reminded once again of the vagaries of class: Fitzgerald was, after all, the granddaughter of not one but two bishops and the great-granddaughter of yet another.

Readers of her novels will find these work experiences and settings familiar. What they will not find in them is much

Aubade

The stars stilled in their green waterdark
pause in the soft webbing
dusk and hold me
close, spiny
mesquite that roots itself
here, what shall I liken
to thee, what harm
that you are cooling, astral,
these porticos draped in fog, you
my visitor waiting
unsung on the ground, the world
moves over you the wind
still transports *sotto voce*
the flocks, and we suspect
we are parceled, unseemly,
full of warm dragging words
who shall surrender to this: ghost-
undertow, flotillas of rainlight,
the sheltering songs, all holding
governed by fear all worth by desire,
star-talker star-creeper who
raises the campaniles high,
hazard us now and hope, hope,
that what disperses above
will gather inside (*peridot*
say the mesas, caught under skies)
—not some rectangle of facts we
breathe ourselves into but faint
through the inkwoods the lure
of subterranean sounds O run
to the edge, cling hard
in the long transhumance of stars, no,
I liken to thee, *beata*
vita, you prevent living, you
harbor the center of the creature
not extinguished, not lost.

Joanna Klink

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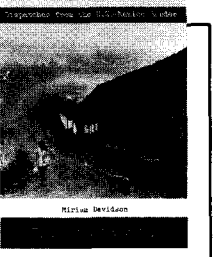
discussion of religion. Fitzgerald told one interviewer that she had strong religious beliefs and regretted not having made this altogether clear in her novels. But she did make it abundantly clear in *The Knox Brothers*. Not clear, to be sure, theologically or denominationally. Whatever her personal creed, her sympathies were sufficiently catholic (with a lower-case "c") to permit her to appreciate the transports and the torments of each of her "God-haunted" characters. Alluding to the "black night of the soul" that Wilfred passed through during the war years, she went on to say that it was "no less painful to a Christian because so many have experienced it." That quiet observation, made almost in passing, is testimony to a profound religiosity and a fine sensibility.

A few years before Fitzgerald's death, A. S. Byatt wrote an appreciation of her that now stands as a memorial tribute. Reading her later novels, Byatt found her to be "Jane Austen's nearest heir, for precision and invention." She was also reminded of what Henry James called "the imagination of disaster," an imagination that was at the same time tragic and comic. And religious as well, for it was the "religious understanding of the individual," the individual understood as "body and soul," that gives shape to her novels. (Byatt casually remarks upon the fact that she first met Fitzgerald when they were both teaching at a tutorial school in the 1960s!)

If one may fault Fitzgerald for an excessive modesty in not dwelling upon her own experiences and recollections, we may find the publisher of the present edition remiss for not taking the occasion to expand upon the excessively modest genealogical table reproduced from the original edition. The table ends with Penelope's generation, the children of the Knox brothers and sister, but even the dates of their births are not recorded, let alone their marriages and their children. (According to the obituaries, Penelope is survived by two daughters, one son, and nine grandchildren.) Now, almost a quarter of a century later, Penelope Fitzgerald deserves more by way of recognition. One of the great novelists of her generation, she has surely earned a prominent place in the intellectual lineage of Knoxes—and thus in the "intellectual aristocracy" of England. ■

LIVES ON THE LINE



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CORRESPONDENCE

continued from page 11

helped only African American sixth graders, and in Dayton and Washington they helped African American children in different grades. Still seems like encouraging enough evidence to merit more tests. Finally, Feldman says the American Federation of Teachers has "led" a "standards and accountability movement." How, exactly? By for years furiously opposing mandatory teacher testing? To take just one example, this summer the Massachusetts Board of Education proposed that in any school where more than 30 percent of the students failed the math portion of the statewide skills test, math teachers should themselves be tested. The teachers who failed wouldn't be fired; they'd simply be given remedial training. The response from the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers (the AFT's affiliate) and the Massachusetts Teachers Association (the National Education Association's affiliate)? They called the idea "demeaning" and "insulting" and filed a lawsuit.

Feldman writes, "Accountability should apply to opinion leaders, too." We couldn't agree more.

Grants' tomb

TO THE EDITORS:

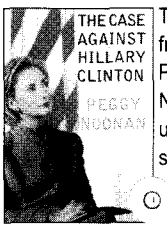
Robert Brustein has written a comprehensive review of my book *Command Performance: An Actress in the Theater of Politics*, but he gets one thing dead wrong ("Ms. Smith Goes to Washington," August 21). He writes that, as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, I "decided to get rid of grants to individual artists." Congress eliminated grants to individual artists, with the exception of Literature Fellowships and the honorary Jazz Masters and Heritage Fellowships. I fought hard to dissuade Congress from this course, which is a matter of public record and which I cover thoroughly in my memoir.

JANE ALEXANDER
Carmel, New York

ROBERT BRUSTEIN REPLIES:

Whoops, Jane, sorry—you're dead right. Congress did impose the ban on funding for individual artists. All you did was administer it. ■

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Please address letters to Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036 (letters may also be sent electronically to tnr@aol.com). All letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be fewer than 200 words. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Please do not send letters via fax.



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THEY MOCKED *BRAVEHEART* here. Clansmen do not wear woad, and Mel Gibson, of course, is not Scottish. But the film's 1995 release did coincide with a burst of Scottish nationalism. Two years later, Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labour government, following through on a campaign promise, granted the Scots their first measure of self-rule in roughly 300 years. Under the terms of the Scotland Act, authority over all domestic policy—from health and education to justice and the environment—would devolve to a Scottish-elected parliament in Edinburgh. It wasn't sovereignty per se: London retained full power over defense and foreign policy, and much of the power to tax. But it was a step in that direction, and Scotland rejoiced. Henceforth, went the thinking, Scotland would be better governed. And, seeing the value of local control, Scots would demand full independence—by voting for nationalists at the ballot box.

BUT, A LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR into the experiment, things are turning out differently. Yes, Edinburgh has all the trappings of a bustling capital. Ministers scoot about in official limousines, clutching important-looking documents. A diplomatic community has sprung up in Edinburgh's desirable neighborhoods; on any given evening, members of the Scottish parliament can be found socializing at consulate receptions. But there's still no question where the real power lies: in London. And it's there because the Scottish people want it that way. In the first parliamentary election after devolution, held in May 1999, Scottish voters denied the Scottish National Party—the longtime champion of independence—a majority. Instead, a plurality voted for the anti-independence British Labour Party, which formed a coalition government with the equally anti-independence Liberals. In the upcoming U.K.-wide elections, Scots will likely back Labour even more strongly, further reaffirming their loyalty to London.

AMERICANS WHO FLOCK TO SCOTLAND for golf, whiskey, mountains, and that poisonous confection called heritage may find this baffling. They shouldn't. The *Braveheart* myth of a small, repressed people chafing under stern British rule has always been just that—a myth. For one thing, there are many kinds of Scots—Highlander and Lowlander, urban and rural, Catholic and Protestant, liberal and conservative—and historic disagreements have often overwhelmed any common ancestry. The Jacobite rebellions, often imagined as national wars between Edinburgh and London, were actually an eighteenth-century tussle between two royal families, which united certain Scots and certain Englishmen against opponents from both nations. Over the years, Scots have frequently been willing—even eager—British subjects. A disproportionate number of the empire's colonial administrators emerged from the great universities in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St. Andrews. Scottish soldiers fought for king, queen, and country with peculiar tenacity in both world wars, Suez, the Falklands, and the Persian Gulf.

LEADERS OF THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL Party have long recognized this. It's one reason they espouse a modern and inclusive brand of national identity, which they call "civic nationalism." As they explain it, you are a Scot because of where you choose to live, not because of your ancient tribal identity or religion. Of course they, and the rest of Scotland, have another reason for playing down ancestral divisions. Until the modern British state swamped their country with tolerance, Scotland was riven by sectarian tension between the large Catholic minority (mainly composed of nineteenth-century Irish immigrants) and the Calvinist majority. The danger of a Northern Ireland-style conflict—a possibility apparent every time Scotland's two great soccer teams, the Catholic Celtic and the Protestant Rangers, meet in Glasgow—means that no responsible democrat will inflame sectarian loyalties. Indeed, even the mild devolution of the last three years has unleashed some ugliness: When Labour timidly suggested granting gay Scots equality under law, the proposal unleashed a ferocious outpouring of bigotry—much of it orchestrated by Cardinal Thomas Winning, the Vatican's top man in Scotland.

FURTHER DAMPENING ENTHUSIASM for greater independence is the amateur, even incompetent, performance of the Scottish government itself. The Scottish Executive (as the Cabinet is known) recently released a psychopathic killer from a secure hospital because the justice minister did not heed warnings that he lacked the legal power to authorize detention. A senior figure has been tainted by allegations of corruption, while Labour's own team has described its manifesto for Scottish government as "unambitious" and "uninspiring." All this against a background of Labour ministers bickering like infants in a schoolyard, each positioning him- or herself for a leadership bid when the widely admired first minister, Donald Dewar, retires—something likely to happen before the next Scottish election, due in 2003.

NOT THAT THE NATIONAL PARTY IS IN any position to capitalize on Labour's weakness. Its longtime and dynamic leader, Alex Salmond, resigned this year. As his successor, the party chose John Swinney, a modest man with much to be modest about. He shrinks from excitement like a kitten from water; he makes Al Gore look impulsive and George W. Bush look articulate. His opponent in the party balloting, Alex Neil, had vowed to create an independent Scotland the moment his party won a majority in a Scottish election. By contrast, Swinney has promised that, even if he does win the 2003 election, he will ask the electorate to endorse independence in a separate referendum—in effect putting independence to a vote twice, which makes it far less likely to pass. It's an extremely timid stance, perfect for a country increasingly convinced that independence is a lovely dream and should probably remain one.

THIS ISN'T TO SAY, OF COURSE, THAT Scots aren't capable of governing forcefully and competently. Quite the contrary; a good number of them seem to be doing a smashing job—in London. Scots are running the Treasury, the Foreign Office, the Department of Social Security, Justice, and many other vital departments of the U.K. state. And there is no evidence that the English resent this domination of their national life by expatriate Scottish politicians.

THANK GOODNESS. WHAT SHOULD really make Scots worry is that, just as they are going squishy on independence, England may decide it's actually not such a bad idea. Scotland receives considerable benefits from the largesse of the London Treasury. The British taxpayer subsidizes Scotland's hugely expensive socialized health service, its welfare system, and the inward investment grants that have tempted international businesses to locate in Scotland. Independence, it turns out, is not only more exciting at the movies; it's cheaper, too.

TIM LUCKHURST

TIM LUCKHURST is a former editor of *The Scotsman*, Scotland's national newspaper.

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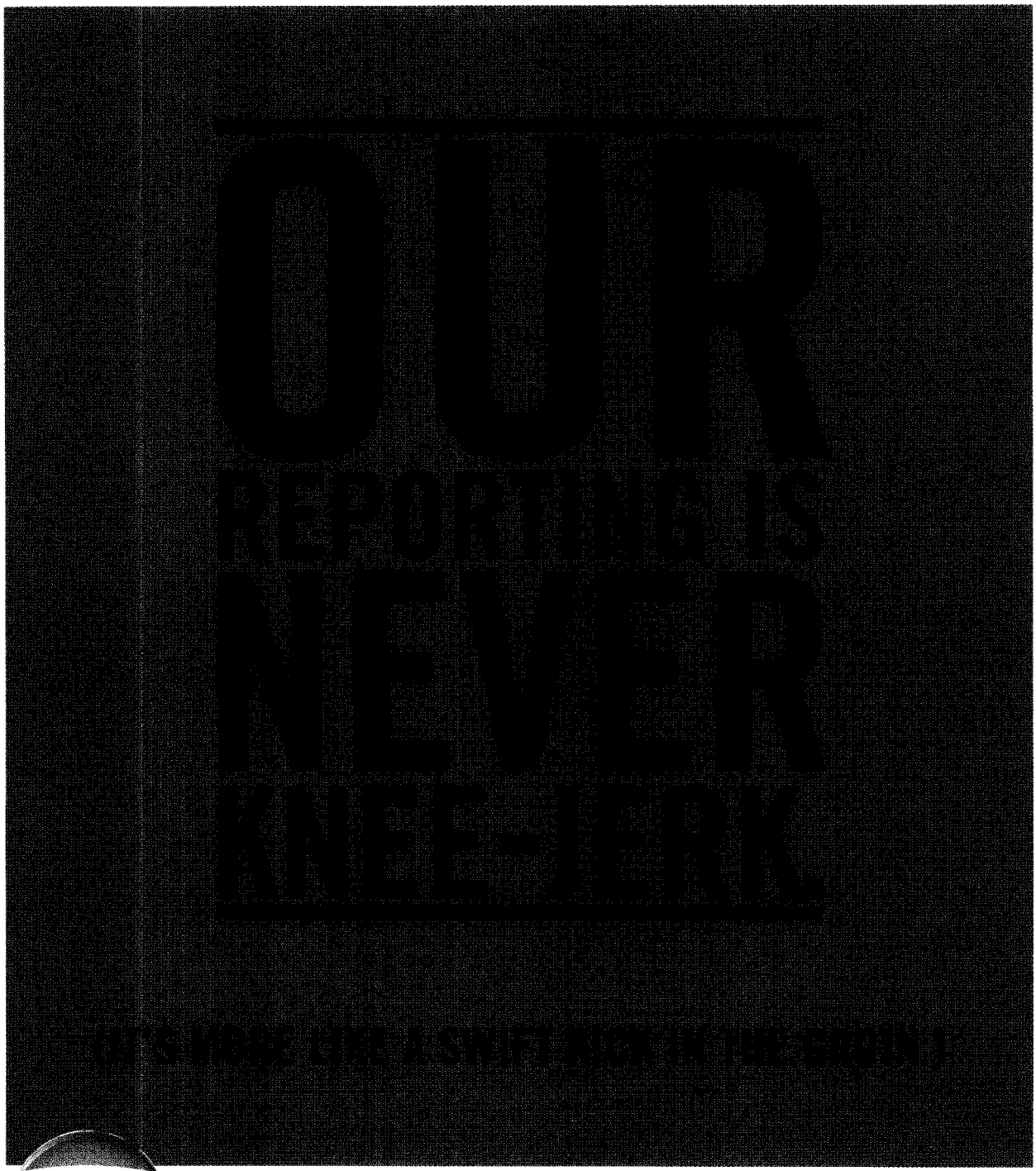

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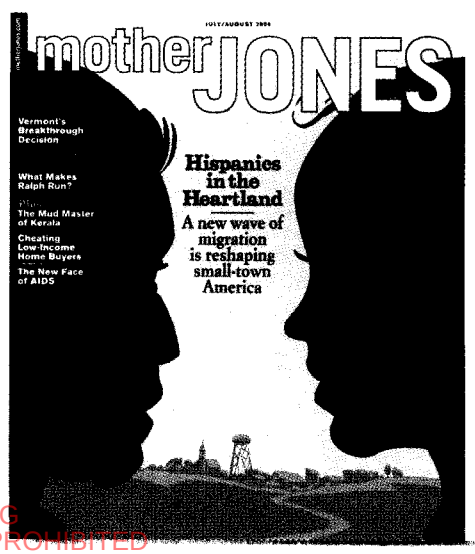
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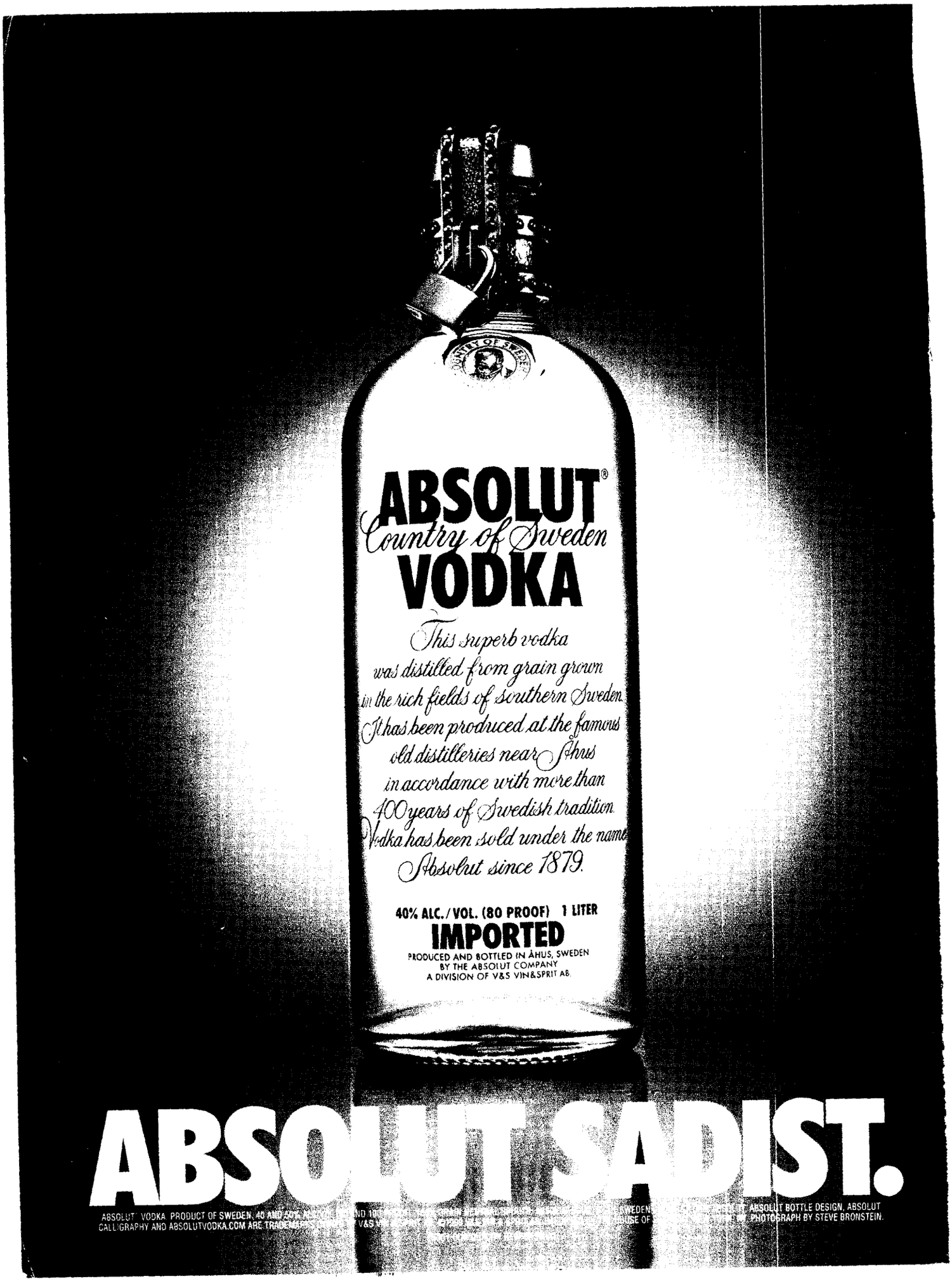
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